

S.C. SPEARMAN CONSULTING SRL

**STUDY ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF MOUNTAIN
TRAILS FOR THE ELECTRIC TOURING BIKE IN
MEHEDINȚI COUNTY**

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Introduction

It is widely recognized that tourism occupies a central place in world economic activity and creation of workplaces and that it plays a key role in terms of export earnings and internal added value. On average, it is the direct source of 4.2% of GDP, 6.9% of employment and 21.7% of service exports to OECD member countries, all of these indicators being equivalent or slightly higher compared to those specific for 2014. Worldwide, international travel arrivals (with overnight stays) brought over € 1.2 billion in 2016, increasing with 46 million (3.9%) compared to the previous year. This figure should reach 1.8 billion euros by 2030, as the increase of the international tourist arrivals in emerging countries should be twice as high as in advanced countries. Consequently, the market share of emerging tourist countries should increase from 45% in 2016 to 57% during the same period. France, the United States, Spain and China remain at the forefront of the international arrival plan in 2016, while China, the United States and Germany are the primary markets in each of their regions (WTO (World Trade Organization, 2017a).

OECD member countries, which accounted for slightly more than half (55%) of total global arrivals in 2016 (compared to 54% in 2014), preserve a predominant place in international tourism. After progressing faster than global arrivals in 2014 (6.4% versus 4.2% globally), international arrivals in OECD member countries declined, the average growth rate being settled at 3.9 % in 2016 (compared with 3.9% worldwide and 4.7% in the EU28). Although the OECD average annual growth rate (4.9%) is slightly above the world average, the figure for 2016 reflects a downward trend in arrivals in the area, as compared to the longer-term global figure, where there is a reduction of its market share. More specifically, 14 OECD member countries registered a double-digit annual growth in 2016. This was above 20% in four of them (Chile - 26%, Korea - 30.3%, Iceland - 39%, Japan - 21, 8%), but declined by more than 10% in Belgium, Latvia and Turkey. International arrivals increased by 10% in at least eight OECD partner countries (South Africa, Bulgaria, Colombia, Costa Rica, Lithuania, Malta, Philippines and Romania).

Recent developments in tourism clearly point out the fact that it continues to grow and expand. The High-Level Meeting on Tourism Policies for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth of 2017 (OECD) provided the opportunity to recognize its potential of driving force in sustainable development in OECD member and partner countries. Such a role is ensured when it is based on well-thought-out policies and effective and efficient management and administration. Public authorities are well placed to guide and support such a process, but such a goal is gradually imposed only if it intervenes in an integrated framework based on structures mobilizing the private sector and many other organizations and bodies at all levels, whose activities may influence the performance and benefits of tourism.

Tourism is a highly labour-intensive sector and a substantial source of workplaces in OECD member countries. It can strongly contribute to employment generating growth. It creates workplaces for the elderly and for persons with different levels of qualification and offers the opportunity to enter the labour market, to acquire professional experience and skills and to progress towards higher and better paid positions.

Between 1995 and 2015, the proportion of semi-skilled occupations in all jobs declined in almost all sectors of the economy, data being obtained on a sample of OECD countries. During this period, the "hotels and restaurants" sector displayed the second growth rhythm of 45% for high qualification jobs and was overtaken by 70% only by the „Real estate, rentals and business activities „sector (OECD, 2017e).

The future of tourism will be driven by widespread social, economic, political, environmental and technological mutations, which are a source of new, often undiscovered risks, opportunities and challenges. These "megatrends" are organized slowly but once rooted, they exert a profound and lasting influence on human activities, perceptions and processes, including the tourism sector. Four megatrends are likely to have a considerable impact and significance for tourism:

- a) the evolution of tourism demand;
- b) Sustainable growth of tourism;
- c) structural technologies;
- d) passenger mobility.

In the coming decades, the increase of the incomes and studies in emerging countries, the persistent aging of the world's population and the emergence of new consumer groups will change the structure of the tourism economy. Demographic change will turn tourism demand deeply in the coming years. Some trends, such as sustainable growth in the world average class and the demographic aging, have as consequence the fact that the world's population will generally be richer and older in the coming decades. In addition, the development of new generations will undermine the criteria currently governing the tourism market. Indeed, generations Y and Z will become key players in mobility, and their travel behaviour could lead to significant changes. As a result of these developments, not only the behaviour of travellers, but also their needs and demands, are likely to be very different from what they are today – fact that will create new opportunities and new challenges for the future and will probably lead to a decline in the current Western conception which dominates the travels, holidays and practices associated with them (Kyyrä and Rantala, 2016).

Tourism is a human activity that depends on natural resources, but at the same time contributes to their exhaustion. Like other sectors of the economy, tourism contributes substantially to energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. It also contributes to the use of fresh water and soil, to environmental degradation and unsustainable food consumption.

Tourism can be a vital part of the transition to a less polluting and economical economy in using resources. Given its transversal character and its links with many other economic sectors, even less important improvements can have significant repercussions. Taking into consideration its potential for advancing the Development Program by 2030 – by generalizing the sustainable consumption and production patterns that are both resource-efficient and generating better economic, social and environmental outcomes - 2017 was proclaimed "International Year of Sustainable Tourism for the Development of the United Nations"

New technologies continue to reconfigure markets and economic sectors around the world, and the rhythm and magnitude of these changes seem to grow. In the last decades, technological advances have made trips much more delightful, accessible and easier for everyone, and could in the future change completely what is considered as tourism (integrated ticketing, mobile payment systems, for example). Thus, the continuous improvement of the virtual reality technique allows conceiving that virtual tourism will complement or replace physical journeys. Instead, life styles are becoming more and more digital and connected the possibility of "disconnecting" and enjoying a natural, non-digital experience during a journey could be more appealing than a purely digital one. It is still unclear how the behaviour will evolve in the face of a change in the paradigm generated by these technologies, but they immediately create many possibilities and difficulties for public officials who want to better position their national and local economies to succeed in the world tourism in 2040.

Transport is an essential link in the tourist system and fulfils the crucial function of ensuring the effective transfer of tourists from their place of residence to the final destination, then to different locations. The location, capacities, efficiency and connectivity of transport are decisive factors in the development and planning of destinations as they have a great influence on the visitor mobility and the ways to access the proposed tourist experiences on the spot. Synergies between transport policies and tourism-specific policies are significant and obvious, and public authorities have a key role to play in their exploitation. If transport policy aims to ensure a strong connectivity and a satisfactory transport for the needs of the economy and the community in the short and long term it also condition the movement of the tourists to the destination. The implementation of integrated intermodal transport systems (terrestrial, maritime and especially aerial), interurban or cross-border transportation requires the coordinated action of different actors to bring about solutions to technical, institutional and financial issues (OECD, 2016c).

Similarly, investment and funding are key elements of the transition to a sustainable development of tourism (reduced carbon emissions, resource saving and social inclusion promotion).

The increasing importance of tourism in national and global economic systems requires governments and all organizations involved to study the multidimensional consequences of the megatrends presented above up to the 2040 horizon and to conceive the necessary public actions and to guide the future of this important economic sector as closely as possible. And this conclusion belongs to the World Tourism Organization

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1. Project objectives

With an enviable tourist potential, Romania did not record results after 1990 as it was expected by the country and its external partners, the most often cited reasons being the underperforming management and administration, the lack of infrastructure and forbidden delays in the promotion of digital technologies. The lack of results can be attributed to the lack of coherent long-term strategies and policies, accepted by all the actors involved, and also to the willingness to put them into practice.

Our country can inspire from the development of tourism in the policies, institutions and instruments of financing and ecological investment, from the good practices that stimulate and support this transition used in the OECD countries that have achieved remarkable results. Romania has already begun to count within OECD statistics and this is a good sign. The solution to the multiform problems that arise in this sector, including the infrastructure and skills needed to meet future demand, requires an integrated approach mobilizing different ministries and administrative units, with the assistance and support of the industry and research community.

The adoption of long-term strategies and policies to promote job quality and job creation, the consolidation of competencies, entrepreneurship, innovation, the efficiency of investments and the integration of regional development is essential to accomplish sustainable and inclusive growth in the tourism sector, in other words, an increase that takes into account current and future economic, social and environmental benefits, and respond to the needs of tourists, tourism professionals, environment and host (receiving) territories.

Identifying new requirements and increasing Romania's access to the European and world market constitutes, in the current context of the tourism development, a natural approach for all the actors involved. Such an approach is not an absolute novelty, because the development stage of tourism in Romania is at a level that allows above all an imitative behaviour to what is happening in France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, the United States or Greece, Croatia, etc.

Bicycle touring, for example, has been for years a market that has passed the emergence stage of countries such as Germany, France, the United States, Canada, Switzerland, and so on. More than 2 million Canadians practiced this sport in 2011 (PMB survey, 2012) and 9 million in 2016, France was occupying the second position in the world after Germany. The turnover achieved in France from bicycle touring was increasing, in the same year, to more than 2 billion euros, with 16,000 jobs and local investments that exceeded 1.5 billion euros.

The cross-border area of Romania and Bulgaria offers an extraordinary surface with a rich cultural and natural heritage, but where tourism does not have attractions geared towards the segment of mountain adventure tourism. Besides mountain hiking and mountaineering, mountain bike touring offers remarkable experiences, and can become a tourist attraction for many adventure lovers in this area. Ecologically in terms of the tools used, bicycle touring can promote a friendly attitude to the fauna and flora in the region. The emergence and development of the electric bikes industry can mean a revival of the demand for mountain tourism for many reasons, most important for the Romanian consumer, being the fact that it is provided an important assistance in crossing over trials and the reduction of the physical effort.

The main objective of the "Joint Adventure on the Mountain Paths" project, code e-MS 384, implemented by the Romanian Association for Electronic Industry and Software, Oltenia Branch, is to support the sustainable development of cross-border tourism in Romania and Bulgaria and to increase the promotion of the mountain area in Mehedinți County and in the counties of Vidin and Montana, through the creation of new products and services and through the direct involvement of all factors interested in the development of tourism in the region. The new tourist offer will increase the number of mountain lovers and will promote the cross-border mountain area in Mehedinți County of Romania and in the counties of Vidin and Montana in Bulgaria. The promotion of mountain tourism activities and mountain biking trails created within the project will increase the number of tourists visiting this unique part of the region. Electric mountain bikes will protect and promote a friendly attitude with the nature in the cross-border mountain region.

At the same time, mountain tourism may increase the number of jobs and improve the standard of living of the locals, may create new tourist services and, with the growth in the number of tourists, the increase of the incomes in Northwest Bulgaria and the Southwest Romania.

The objective of the present study is to identify in detail all types of mountain biking trails (routes with various degrees of difficulty) in Mehedinți County, as well as the natural patrimony to which they provide access. By means of this primary objective it is expected the development of the sustainable use of existing natural heritage, of the tourism infrastructure. In addition, another objective of the study is to create a unitary methodology for exploring the natural potential of each of the three regions (1 county in Romania and 2 districts in Bulgaria, from the target area of the project).

2. Research methodology

Methodological and theoretical-scientific support of the research uses the concepts, fundamental principles and works of some well-known authors such as Jafari, Leiper, Forlani, Victor, Parthasarathi, Corfee-Morlot, Laimer, Samans, Kyrrä and Rantala, Munteanu, Angelescu, Jula, Benea, Bleahu, Decu, Negrea, Pleșa, Povara, Viehmann, Boteanu, Borloveanu, Cocean, Cosmescu, etc.

The investigative methodology includes general and specific approaches to tourism concepts and tools and to its segment of mountain biking. For the practical part, the emphasis was laid on the research-action method, on the case study, on benchmarking examples used mainly in the classification of mountain biking trails in Mehedinți area. The information support of the study includes, besides the studied bibliography, the regulations of the WTO (World Tourism Organization), OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) and other international bodies, the legislative and normative acts in the field of mountain tourism from Romania and from the European Union, other data presented by the National Institute of Statistics (INS) from Romania, specialized websites, and so on.

The scientific novelty of the study consists, first of all, in research into the contribution that mountain tourism, in particular bicycle touring with electric bikes, may have in sustainable development and in the revitalization of the tourist area represented by Mehedinți County. The cross-border perspective offers additional attributes to the development of mountain bike touring in Romania by providing more and more various attractions, which can determine much easier the increase of attractiveness of the area and the demand. The key to success is the achievement of a rich, balanced and homogeneous offer involving tourism companies, local and county public administration bodies, national bodies, ministries with competences and responsibilities in the field of tourism, the Romanian government.

The structure of the study respects the rigors of the elaboration of such a problem and contains an introduction, five parts, conclusions, annexes and bibliography. The content of the five parts and their order were chosen in such way as to observe the principles of scientific rigor, coherence, consistency and content of the work, systematization and the psycho-pedagogical ones, related to the accessibility of information, the coherence of ideas and to their increasing complexity.

In the attempt to provide a useful tool in this field of reference, we approached the theoretical aspects of the literature, various opinions of the specialists, as well as the practical aspects observed in the research, which allowed us to extract some personal observations and opinions. However, a number of aspects may not be included in the study, either due to the limited access to a number of scientific papers and research articles, or due to the personal potential to seize issues. It therefore remains improvable and I am grateful for any suggestions and recommendations.

3. Natural resources of the area. The natural touristic patrimony of Mehedinți County

3.1. Geographic location of Mehedinți County

Situated in the south-western part of the country, Mehedinți County is distinguished as a well individualized administrative unit, with an old tradition, whose existence was and is closely related to the Danube and the "flat mountainous area" of Mehedinți.

A component unit of the Carpathian-Danubian space, where the geographic landscape presents a harmonious combination of its elements, has provided, since the ancient times, favourable conditions for ethnogenesis and maintenance of the autochthonous population over the centuries.

Mehedinți County is bordered to the west by Caraș-Severin County; the limit starts from the confluence of the Craiova stream with the Cerna waters (the place called "La schit"), it continues on the Cerna valley up to the stream of Țăsna, following a small portion on it. From the valley of Țăsna the limit ascends to the main peak of the Mehedinți Mountains, the peak known as Inălățu Mare (1301 m), it passes over the peak known as Colții Pietrei (1229 m) leaving in the west part the Domogled massif (1105 m), then continues over Creasta Cocosului (917 m), then descends again in the valley of Cerna, which crosses in the south side of Topleț.

The eastern boundary, to Dolj county, is formed by a sinuous line starting from Gura Motrului, passing through the High Plain of Bălcița in the east part of the localities Țânțaru, Marcu valley, Smadovița, Corzu, Opișor, Gemeni, traversing the Drincea valley, and continues up to the point where Drincea flows down into the Danube.

The southern boundary is a natural boundary formed by the Danube river, which is a part of the state border with Serbia until the point where Timok flows down into the Danube and a part of the state border with Bulgaria from the mouth of Timok to the mouth of Drincea in the Danube.

Between these limits the territory of Mehedinți County covers an area of 4 900 sq. Km, representing 2.1% of the country's surface.

3.2. Natural touristic patrimony of Mehedinți county

The relief of the county, made up of mountains, plateaus and plains, appears in the form of an amphitheatre arranged in steps that descend from north-northwest to south-southwest. The sequential arrangement of relief forms on a level difference of more than 1 400 m, between Vârful lui Stan (1448 m) and about 40 m in the Danube Auen, proves the great diversity of the relief, characteristic for the whole territory of the country. The highest point is situated in the western and north-western part of the county and is represented by the eastern and southern peaks of the Almaj Mountains and the Mehedinți Mountains.

The Almăj Mountains in the western part of the county have altitudes between 800 and 1200 m (the highest peak is Svinecea Mare 1 226 m) and they are located between the Almăj (Bozovici) depression in the northwest, the narrow valley of Cerna to the east, the Liubcova-Sopotu Nou pass to the west and the Danube to the south.

The Mehedinți Mountains lie in the north-west of the county, along the left bank of the Cerna valley, between the valley of Motru to the north and the Mehedinți Plateau to the south and east. The maximum altitude is in Vârful lui Stan (1446 m) and represents the highest height in the county. In Mehedinți County, it is developed the entire eastern slope and only a part of the western slope, in the form of a more elongated peak and with a width not exceeding 4-5 km.

Within the Mehedinți Mountains two main ridges are distinguished: a ridge highlighted by the peaks of Ferigari (928 m), Coltul Pietrii (1229 m), Ciolanu Mare (1135 m) and Ciolanu Mic (1048 m), and the second one by the peaks Costegu Mare (1325 m), Piatra Alba (1335 m) and Bruscan (1300 m). Along the steep Mehedinți mountain, there are the following heights: Înălățu Mic (1146 m), Înălățu Mare (1301 m), Geanțu Cârlig (1208 m), Geanțu Mare (1308 m) and Vârful lui Stan (1466 m).

At the ground of Mehedinți Mountains a lower step lies by about 400-500 m, known as the Mehedinți Plateau, which continues to the south and south-east with the Hills of Motru and the High Plain of Bălcița.

As a result of its geological structure (crystalline shale, Mesozoic limestone), relief forms (deep and narrow valleys, sometimes in the form of ravines, caves), tectonic fragmentation, and so on. Mehedinți Plateau can be classified as mountain, but at the same time, due to the reduced altitude (the average of 500-600 m), it may be included in the category of smooth ridges, and due to the intense humanization it can also be framed in the hilly regions. Mehedinți Plateau reaches down over 50 km from Northeast to Southwest and on a width of 20 km, covering an area of approximately 1200 km².

Although the overall aspect of the relief is smooth, in detail, the relief is intensely fragmented, being crossed by numerous deep and narrow valleys with steep slopes, hard to reach; the most enlightening examples are the valleys of Topolnita, Coșuștea and Bahnei. Crystalline rocks and the limestone, acting in a variety of ways, have a distinct morphology with various landscapes. An oscillation of level of a few tens of meters makes the transition to the lowest relief of the county on its southern part, formed by the Blahnița Plain, the Punghina Plain, and a small portion of the Băilești Plain.

On the territory of Mehedinți County there are geological formations very different in terms of age and petrographic constitution. The oldest formations are made up of crystalline shale (gneiss, mica schist, amphibolite, and so on) with wide expanse in the Mehedinți plateau, especially along the Bahna valley and at the contact between the piedmont and the Mehedinți Plateau. Also here are the oldest fossil geological formations in the Carpathian Mountains (in the Obârșia Cloșani region), of Silurian age, to which there are also added graptolite shales.

Mesozoic sedimentary deposits has also a widespread expansion, and many of them are made of limestone rocks which offer a special karst landscape, with wide expanse in the Mehedinți Plateau and in the Danube Defile.

In the area of the depression contact groove between Mehedinți Plateau and the Piedmont of Motru, as well as in the whole hilly area, Neozoic sedimentary deposits, mainly formed of sands, clays and gravel, with frequent fossilized nests, are very common.

By its position in the south-western part of the country, Mehedinți County has a temperate continental climate, in which there are submediterranean influences. Throughout the year, but especially in winter, above the county there are invasions of air masses, warm and wet, of Mediterranean and oceanic origin. Thereby, the winters in this part of the country are milder; precipitations occur in the form of ice pellets and snow. The winds from the western and south-western sector predominate, and freezing occur less frequently and with less intensity. The summers are generally warm, sometimes with temperatures above 35 ° C, due to the invasion of tropical warm air. In some summers, in the south-eastern part of the county there are phenomena such as aridity and drought, due to the entrance of the continental air from east-northeast.

The hydrographic network of Mehedinți County is represented by two main arteries - Danube and Motru - and numerous secondary arteries, some with permanent regime, others with temporary regime. The hydrographic network shows obvious differences in density, higher in the Almăj Mountains, in the depression contact between Mehedinți Plateau and the Piedmont of Motru (0.5 - 0.7 km / km²) and smaller in the Mehedinți Mountains, Mehedinți Plateau and in the plain area (less than 0,4 km / km²).

The Danube, from the total length of 1075 km that crosses our country, 220 km are on the territory of Mehedinți County, starting upstream from the mouth of Poloșevei, in the west, up to the point where Drincea flows down into the Danube, to the east. In the mountain area, the Danube has created one of the most grandiose

gorges in its entire course - the Transcarpathian Gorge - about 130 km long, starting from Bazias and up to Gura Văii, a large part of it being carried out on the territory of Mehedinți County. In this sector, the Danube is deep and presents a series of bassinets and straits, through which the two neighbouring depression units (Pannonian in the West and Pontic in the East) are connected.

The "Iron Gates" dam measures 430 meters in length and 60 meters in width. There are two locks for navigation: one to the Romanian bank, the other to the Serbian one, which ensures a continuous flow of water. The hydroelectric power installed on the Romanian side is over 1000000 kW and an annual production of 5 billion kW.

The Lacustrine System is represented by the Iron Gates reservoir of special economic significance, the lake formed after the construction of the dam from Gura Văii - Sip. The lake has a length of over 230 km, an area of about 700 km² and a volume of water of 12 km³. In the area of Mehedinți Plateau karst there are some lakes with temporary character: Zătonul Mare, Zătonul Mic, Ponoare, Gornovița and Balta.

The existence of Mesozoic limestone and conglomerates allows for the storage of large quantities of groundwater and deep water which sometimes appear on the surface in the form of springs (the spring of Cosuștea, the spring of Brebina, the spring of Bulba, the spring of Rieni, and so on.), being the main sources for the rivers in the area.

There are 2 major protected areas on the territory of the county: the Iron Gates Natural Park and Mehedinți Plateau Geopark (including the site of community importance ROSCI0198 Mehedinți Plateau).

3 sites Natura 2000 are overlapping in the Iron Gates Natural Park, as follows:

a) ROSPA0026 The Danube Water Course Bazias – Iron Gates, with an area of 10120.4 ha, according to the Government Decision no. 1284/2007, as subsequently amended and supplemented;

b) ROSPA0080 The Almăjului-Locvei Mountains, with an area of 118141,6 ha, according to the Government Decision no. 1284/2007, as subsequently amended and supplemented;

c) ROSCI0206 The Iron Gates, with an area of 124293,0 ha, according to the Order of the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development no. 1964/2007, as subsequently amended.

4. Selection of electric mountain touring bike trails

The achievement of the main objective of the present study was, first of all, the identification of potential routes on which mountain bike touring can be developed in Mehedinți County and, on the other hand, a preliminary classification thereof, ranking to choose the most representative of them according to pertinent criteria. The identification of the routes was based on the information in the literature, those provided by the county organizations and bodies, the local councils and those existing at the companies and other tourism organizations involved in such activities. Most of the necessary information on these routes has been checked on the ground by specialists in geography and tourism.

The theoretical and practical approach resulted in the analysis of the tourist heritage that can be accessed with the practice of electric touring bike and a number of 15 routes that can be practiced in this type of tourism, located in two areas of interest of the county, respectively The Mehedinți Mountains and the Mehedinți Plateau, on the one hand, and the Clisura Dunării and Almăj Mountains, on the other.

For budgetary reasons, but considering the possibilities of local actors in the field of tourism to effectively support and promote such a project, the present study has proposed for analysis and development a number of 10 trails for electric touring bike. For the selection of the 10 trails, the model proposed by the French Tourism Federation and the French Cycle-Touring Federation in 2016 was used at the initiative of the Ministries of

Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy and the Ministry of Economy, Industry and the Digital Sector from France.

With almost 4.5 million practitioners, the mountain bike touring is one of the most popular sport activities of the French. In order to support its development and to facilitate access to this sporting practice in nature, the French Cycling Federation (FCF) and the French Cycle-Touring Federation (FCTF), in accordance with the prerogatives entrusted to them by the State, have defined the technical classification, safety and equipment rules for mountain biking trails.

To make it easier to grasp the classification of mountain bike routes, the two federations have decided to harmonize their quotation grids for the mountain biking trails. Since 2016, the assessment of the difficulty of a mountain biking trail is defined on the basis of a single document validated by both federations. This reconciliation activity will allow practitioners using thousands of miles of marked mountain biking trails to have a better legibility in respect of the mountain tourism offer on the ground. This harmonization will also simplify the activity of mountain biking managers. The two federations thus understood to contribute to the coordinated development of mountain bike touring. The criteria used to classify the trails for electric mountain touring bike and associated grids are found in Charts 1 and 2.

It should be noted that the symbolism of colours offers, as mentioned above, information on the accessibility of the promenade electric touring bike trails, without mentioning the electric touring bike (Chart no. 3)

Chart no1

SELECTION CRITERIA USED IN THE QUOTING OF ELECTRIC TOURING BIKE TRAILS

No.	Selection criteria	Criteria levels (km)	Number of associated points
1.	Length of the trail (km)	< 20	1
		21- 40	2
		41- 60	3
		> 60	4
2.	The height of the trail (m)	> 250	1
		251-500	2
		501-850	3
		> 850	4
3.	Type of road	Stabilized trail / track, which can be paved	1
		Track with soil or grass, wide enough for a vehicle to pass (means of transport)	2
		Narrow path or trail (one tourist can pass)	3
4.	Technique required for the cyclists	Access does not require any special technique	1
		Access requires a first level of VTT piloting. The presence of small obstacles, a small number, no real difficulties, no special techniques (runways, stones, wetlands)	2
		Crossing requires certified technical qualities for mountain bikes. Numerous obstacles encountered on the trail	3
		Access that requires perfect mastery of all VTT piloting techniques. Very demanding route, with test areas in many of its sectors, with steep ascents and descents	4

Chart no.2

CLASSIFICATION GRID ASSOCIATED WITH THE ELECTRIC TOURING BIKE TRAILS *

No.	Associated color	Total points
1.		4-5
2.		6-8
3.		9-12
4.	EAGRA	13-15

*** OBSERVATIONS**

This grid is only a tool of support in the operations for classification of electric touring bike trails. On a track with variable difficulties, the final quotation takes into account, for each criterion, the highest level. To ensure reliability, the quotation for each criterion should not be underestimated. The classification does not take into account the meteorological risks, which may increase the difficulty of the trail.

Chart no.3

ACCESSIBILITY OF PROMENADE ELECTRIC TOURING BIKE TRAILS

	4 - 5 stars	Very easy	Ideal for family
	6 - 8 stars	Easy	Available to all practitioners
	9-12 stars	Difficult	For tourists who frequently use the bicycle
	13-16 stars	Very difficult	For experienced hikers and athletes

For spatial reasons and for facilitating the analysis, mountain biking trails have been symbolized according to the area, respectively A, for Mehedinți Mountains and Plateau, and B, for the area Clisura Dunării-Almăj Mountains. A specific order number has been added to this basic symbol, as shown in Chart 4.

Chart no.4

ELECTRIC MOUNTAIN CYCLE TOURING TRAILS
FOR THEIR SELECTION AND SYMBOLS

No.	Trail symbol	Specific itinerary
1.	A1	Cireșu(Canton Salvamont)-Bahna-Ilovița-Meteriz-Creasta Cocosului-Topolova- Bahna Valley -Cireșu (Canton Salvamont)
2.	A2	Cireșu-Jupânești-Balta-Malarișca-Dealul Bătăliei-Cireșu
3.	A3	Cireșu-Marga-Șiroca-Sfodea-Malarișca-Podeni- Bahna Valley-Canton Salvamont- Cireșu
4.	A4	Podeni-Topolova-Culmea Munților Mehedinți-Balta Cerbului-Gornești-Podeni
5.	A5	Ponoarele-Ceptureni-Bârâiacu-Valea Ursului-Cracu Muntelui- Ponoarele
6.	A6	Ponoarele-Cheile Băluței-Bala de Sus-Bratovoiești-Baia de Arama-Gărdăneasa- Ponoarele

7.	A7	Ponoarele- Băluța Ravines-Busești-Ponoarele
8.	A8	Isverna-Nadanova-Cerna Vârf-Firizu-Dâlbocița-Busești-Isverna
9.	A9	Isverna-Seliște-Valea Verde-Godeanu-Obârșia Cloșani-Stănești-Bârâiacu-Valea Ursului-Nadanova-Gornovița-Isverna
10.	A10	Balotești-Bâlvănești-Călineștii de Sus-Șiroca- Godeanu-Schitu Topolniței-Balotești
11.	A11	Drobeta Turnu Severin-Halânga-Schitu Topolniței-Jidoștița-Drobeta Turnu-Severin
12.	A12	Drobeta Turnu Severin-Dealul Vărănic--Jidoștița-Scînteiești-Cerneți-Drobeta Turnu-Severin
13.	B1	Dubova-Mraconia-Bigăr- Ravna Glade- Poncova Valley-Dubova
14.	B2	Dubova-Valea Satului-Dealul Cocinilor- Ravna Glade -Eibenthal- Dubova
15.	B3	Eșelnița-Bregheda-Eșelnița

The data necessary for the classification, related to each of the 15 trails, out of which 12 are located in the area of Mehedinți Mountains and Plateau, and the other 3 are part of Clisura Dunării-Almăj Mountains, were extracted from their description sheets and included in the chart no.5. After processing, they produced the scores and colour associated with each of the 15 trails analysed.

Chart no.5

THE RESULTS OF DATA PROCESSING FOR THE CLASSIFICATION OF ELECTRIC TOURING BIKE TRAILS

No.	Trail symbol	Selection criteria								Total score	Associated colour
		Length		Altitude		Type of road		Technique			
1.	A1	44,4	3	912	4	Path	3	Level 3	4	14	
2.	A2	31,3	2	675	3	Track	2	Level 1	2	9	
3.	A3	34,8	2	679	3	Path	3	Level 2	3	11	
4.	A4	41,0	3	1132	4	Path	3	Level 3	4	14	
5.	A5	18,0	1	598	3	Track	2	Level 2	3	9	
6.	A6	36,0	2	588	3	Track	2	Level 2	3	10	
7.	A7	21,5	2	562	3	Track	2	Level 2	3	10	
8.	A8	51,2	3	698	3	Path	3	Level 2	3	12	
9.	A9	49,3	3	698	3	Trail	1	Level. 1	2	9	
10.	A10	36,6	2	701	3	Track	2	Level 1	2	9	
11.	A11	45,0	3	245	1	Trail	1	Without	1	6	
12.	A12	37,6	2	393	2	Trail	1	Without	1	6	
13.	B1	62,3	4	829	3	Path	3	Level 2	3	13	
14.	B2	45,2	3	799	3	Trail	1	Level 1	2	9	
15.	B3	46,8	3	979	4	Path	3	Level 1	2	12	

The process of selection of electric mountain cycle touring trails is not as simple as it may seem at first glance, since direct use of the results of the classification could result in the elimination of those who scored less, which is not correct from several points of view. First of all, natural heritage is not the proper object of the classification, and from this point of view, some very beautiful and rich trails can be removed from the project because they have a low score, which can not correspond to the reality of the demand. Also, a high score favours routes that are accessible only to professionals, but customers, demand carriers, are heterogeneous and can ask for easier routes. Obviously, among the important factors that may influence the selection there can also be added, for example, the local conditions and the capacity of the local factors to support certain collateral investments, the

possibility of access to a larger tourist market (through cross-border projects and European tourism programs and so on)

From the series of the 15 tourist trails analysed on the field, 5 of them have been removed, respectively A2, A5, A10, A11 and A12 from Charts 4 and 5, meaning:

- Cireșu-Jupănești-Balta-Mălărișca- Dealul Bătăliei-Cireșu;
 - Ponoarele-Ceptureni-Bârâiacu-Valea Ursului-Cracu Muntelui-Ponoarele;
- Balotești-Bâlvănești-Călineștii de Sus-Șiroca-Godeanu-Schitu Topolniței-Balotești;
 - Drobeta Turnu-Severin-Halânga-Schitu Topolniței- Jidoștița-Drobeta Turnu Severin;
 - Drobeta Turnu-Severin-Dealul Vărănic - Jidoștița-Scînteiești-Cernești-Drobeta Turnu-Severin.

There may be several arguments in supporting this decision, such as:

- a) the removed routes have a natural heritage and a tourist infrastructure similar to other trails retained in the study;
- b) out of several proposals starting from the same locality there were selected 2 starting from Cireșu locality and other 2 starting from Ponoarele locality; initially three proposals were submitted by each of these localities;
- c) the routes starting from Drobeta Turnu-Severin have been totally eliminated (3) as they were considered less interesting from the point of view of mountain biking and their natural heritage, compared to the other trails maintained in the study.

5. 5. Electric mountain touring bike trails with potential for sustainable tourism development

Following the analysis of the tourism potential of Mehedinți County, 10 routes have been selected which have the potential to develop electric mountain touring bike, located in two areas of interest of the county, respectively 7 in the Mehedinți Mountains and Plateau, and 3 in the Clisura Dunării and in Almăj Mountains . The technical description of each route is included in the item 4.2.1 and the annexes include specific maps, GPS coordinates for location in gpx and kml format.

5.1. Electric mountain touring bike trails in Mehedinți Mountains and Mehedinți Plateau

A1. Cireșu (canton Salvamont) - Bahna- Ilovița- Meteriz- Creasta Cocoșului- Topolova- Cireșu (canton Salvamont)

The length of this trail is 44.4 km, the maximum altitude is 912 m, the maximum slope is 22.5%, with moderate traffic, on a 6% of asphalted road and a 94% of dirt road. GPS coordinates are 44°48'44,91"N and 22°31'12,77"E.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAIL

The trail starts from Canton Salvamont (2 km from the centre of Cireșu, 34 km from Drobeta Turnu Severin on DJ 607B, 25 km from Orșova on DN6 and DJ607C), near the bridge over the Bahna River. The first 11 km are crossed through the county road (not asphalted, a dirt road) that follows the Bahna course and passes through the villages of Bahna and Ilovița and then follows the course of Racovăț stream, continues through the forest and reaches the ridge of the Mehedinți Mountains under the Meteriz peak (720 m). The trail follows the forest road, at the kilometre 25 it shall be going to the left on the road that descends to Topleț, then the road ascends to Creasta Cocoșului

(917m) until the crossroad with the route that descends on Topolova (km 30.5). At the crossroad, a tourist route starts (blue cross) which goes down to Baile Herculane through the Feregari Ravines. The bicycle route follows the Topolova Valley and then the Bahna Valley for 6 km to the Salvamont-Ciresu canton.

ACCESS

-road: from E70 on national / communal roads: 34 km from Severin-DJ 607B, 25 km from Orsova-DN6 and DJ607C

-railway: thoroughfare 900 Craiova-Drobeta Turnu Severin-Orsova-Baile Herculane-Timisoara

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

The route does not have dominant anthropic tourist attractions, but it is a natural beauty area with many natural tourist resources.

NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

The area of the Mehedinti Mountains and Mehedinti Plateau is made up of crystalline rocks, such as the “petecul de **Bahna**”, and sedimentary deposits of limestone and rocks with flysch character belonging to “Pânza de Severin”, the relief being represented by hills and plateaus with deep valleys, which in the limestone areas form wild ravines. One of the mountain peaks in the area is the **Meteriz Peak** 720 meters, **Creasta Cocosului Peak** 917 meters, which is part of the western border of Mehedinți County. The main watercourse in the area is Bahna, which springs from the Mehedinti Plateau and its tributaries Racovăț and Tarovăț, flows into the Danube.

Other points of interest include Bahna Forest and Gulf. This is a specific area for limestone meadows, xerophilous to mezoxerophilous, of Festuco-Brometea class is a habitat formed in Mehedinti Plateau Geopark, from steppe or subcontinental meadows (Festucetalia valesiacae). These meadows are partially natural, partly anthropogenic: they are secondary meadows on the site of deforestation of sessile oak and hornbeam forests (Brachypodio pinnati-Festucetum rupicolae and Danthonio-Brachypodietum pinnati), secondary meadows installed on the site of orchards or abandoned or destroyed vineyards (Agrostio- Festucetum valesiacae).

At the same time, there are Tilio-Acerion forests on steep slopes, groves and ravines. These are mixed forests consisting of mixed species (Acer pseudoplatanus, Fraxinus excelsior, Ulmus glabra, Tilia cordata) from the grooves, steep rocky slopes or harsh colluvium of the slopes, especially on limestone substrates, but also on silicate substrates.

In the **Cireșu** area there are also meadows used for hayfields dominated by Agrostis capillaris, with the absence of the species Festuca rubra. These phytocoenoses belong as. Anthoxantho - Agrostetum capillare Silinger 1933 (sin.: Agrostetum tenuis Szafer, Pawl et Kulkz 1923, Agrostetum tenuis montanum Isler 1933, Agrostetum tenuis biharicum Resmeriță 1965, Festuceto-Agrostetum tenuis montanum Csuros et Resmeriță 1960, Hypochoeri radicatae-Agrostetum tenuis I. Pop). They occupy plateaus, slopes, and even higher terraces of the meadows. The association is very close to the floristic and areal composition as. Festuco rubrae - Agrostetum capillare Horvat 1951 (Festuco- Agrostietum Csűrös et Kaptalan 1964), which is why it is very difficult to delimit.

At the same time there are Illyrian oak forests (Quercus dalechampii), beech (Fagus sylvatica) and silver lime (Tilia tomentosa) with hornbeam (Erythronio-Carpinion). These are developed on slopes with low and medium inclinations, with various exhibitions, valleys, ridges, plateaus, various rocks: molasse, marl, calcareous sandstone, on various types of soil: eutricambosol, deep, weak acid, basic, hydric, eutrophic.

The Bahna Fossil Site is a natural reservation included in IV IUCN category, being of a paleontological type. This site is located between Ilovita and Bahna and preserves the fauna of the Miocen (Badenian) (16 million years) with bivalves, gastropods and vertebrates. The fossil fauna is situated on the valley of Racovăț, valley of Lespezi and the valley of Curchia. There are here Leitha type limestone made of red-algal limestone rich in coral,

molluscs (Venus, Turitella, Conus, Pecten), urchins and foraminifera. There are two points of interest: one in Ilovița, where the deposits of limestone and the clays contain numerous molluscs, urchins and fossil foraminifera belonging to the Sarmatian, and another to the northwest of Bahna, at Curchia, where the reefal limestone contain many corals, bryozoan, bivalvia, urchins, brachiopods.

Natura 2000 ROSCI0206 The Iron Gates Site is located on 65% of the area of Ilovița. Butterfly species *Callimorpha quadripunctaria* is commonly found in several localities, usually in glades, lizards, but also in orchards and gardens; it was reported as bright trap from **Salvamont Ciresu Chalet**. The bats *Myotis bechsteinii*, *Rhinolophus euryale* and *Myotis capaccinii* were reported in Ciresu.

ANTHROPIC ATTRACTIONS

Heritage elements related to human settlements are represented on the route in the village of Bahna by mean of a mill dating back to 1890 in Ciresu through the mansion.

Traditional manifestations related to religious or secular events in Ilovița – “Beginning of Spring Ball” on February 28th and “the Sons of the Village” on the last Sunday of July, also taking place in Ciresu (Bunoaica). The feast of Topolnita cave in Ciresu township.

TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

ACCOMODATION

- The touristic pension Maria **, Bahna, 8 places. The pension is located in Bahna village, on the bank of Bahna river, when it flows into the Danube (at 17 km from Dr. Tr. Severin and 5 km from Orșova). The pension has parking, terrace on the waterfront, 4 rooms with own bathroom and TV. Contact: 0721251009, 0722849798.
- Maria Pension **, Ilovita, 10 places (5 double rooms). The pension offers parking, TV, bathroom with shower, fridge / minibar, restaurant, terrace. Contact: 0252314936
- Salvamont Ciresu Chalet
- Travelers can also stay in traditional houses where they can take part in household activities in the village of Ilovița.

FOOD

- The restaurant of Maria Pension **, Ilovița offering traditional and fish dishes.

RECREATION

- Water sports at Bahna as well as boating and fishing

SERVICES

- Accommodation and catering services provided by pensions as well as parking.
- Tourist information through the visitor information center from Baia de Aramă, Drobeta Turnu-Severin and Orșova, and through the visitor information center of the Iron Gates Natural Park at Dubova

A3. Cireșu- Marga- Șiroca- Sfodea- Malarișca- Podeni- Valea Bahnei- Canton Salvamont- Cireșu

The length of this trail is 34.8 km, the maximum altitude is 679 m, the maximum slope is 20.7%, with moderate traffic, on a 17% asphalted road and 83% of dirt road. The GPS coordinates are 44°49'34, 86"N and 22°32'15, 72"E

DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAIL

The trail starts from the centre of Cireșu (32 km from Drobeta Turnu Severin, on DJ607B and 27 km from Orsova, on DN6 then on DJ607C) in the direction of Jupânești village and after 1.5 km it turns on the right in the southeast on the "Cornet" of the Cave (cornet = limestone hill on which the cornus mas predominantly grows). In the point called "La Varniță" starts the tourist path that descends to the Topolnița Cave (one of the largest and most beautiful caves) and then to Prosăc, where the river Topolnița starts its underground road of almost one km (one of the most spectacular portals in Romania). The trail continues to the Marga village, at 7,5 km it reaches the DJ670 that connects Drobeta Turnu Severin to Baia de Aramă and after only one km, in the Șiroca village, leaves the county road and heads northwards, descending to the stream bed of Topolnița on a quite steep slope. Hence the trail follows the Topolnița course upstream, passes through the Sfodea village and then on a road that heads to Malarișca. From Malarișca, the trail descends to Podeni; from there it follows the Bahna River on an 11 km section to the Canton Salvamont from where it ascends to Cireșu.

ACCESS

- road: from E70 on national / communal roads: 32 km from Severin on DJ 607B, 25 km from Orșova - on DN6 then on DJ607C
- railway: thoroughfare 900 Craiova-Drobeta-Turnu Severin-Orșova-Băile Herculane-Timișoara

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

The Karst from the Mehedinti Plateau is a karst formed in limestone, levelled and fragmented bars, in which the valley network, captured in the underground, formed large cave systems. On the surface of the limestone bar were formed either karst plateaus covered with limestone pavements, sinkholes, valleys with sinkholes or dry valleys (Jupânești), or caves famous for their size. Due to the variety of exocarstic forms and underground networks, the Mehedinti Plateau Geopark is considered to be one of the most important karst regions in Romania. In the geopark there are over 200 caves (out of which 4 have over 3 km, all of them being declared reserves) culminating with the Topolnita Cave, which by its 25 km development is in the top 10 of Romania.

Topolnita karst complex, contained in a 50ha reserve, where there are many karst forms of great originality (with a gigantic cavern, complex morphology and especially beautiful and spectacular galleries), includes the Topolnita Cave of remarkable scientific interest, all the stages of the evolution of a cave, from digging to warping, could be followed. Galleries comprise 12,000 m, disposed on 5 floors, out of which Racovita Gallery of 1,570 m is the most impressive speleological formation in the Carpathians.

Topolnita Cave was water sculpted being formed by three streams: Topolnița, Găurinti and Ponorăț. Topolnița is a warm cave (8,20C-10,80C), showing a special interest for the variety of biotopes and the elements that make up the respective biocenosis. Trogllobiont species, current skeletal remains of carnivores, insectivores

and ruminants, as well as fossils of *Ursus spelaeus* are found. The complex also includes the **Epuran Cave**, which is one of the most interesting speleological discoveries of the last quarter of the XXth century, with an area of 1 ha, is a protected area classified in the IIIrd category IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) (with A classification), and the Woman Cave (Pestera Femeilor) with galleries arranged on 2 floors, but also **Poiana Lunca Ciresului**. These caves are closed to public access, including their lakes and underground springs, which house specialized or strictly endemic species, or which are of particular importance for the conservation of bats and amphibians.

Other karst formations are those from Balta: Balta cave - 600 m long, **Curecea cave** - 2.200 m long, with limestone concretions, flowing water, cavernicolous fauna, important for their morphology and hydrography (Balta township), Câmpul Peșterii - a large and smooth limestone plateau with numerous sinkholes and permanent whirlpools.

Topolnița Ravines, a botanical reservation, with a surface of 60-ha, is located in the south part of Godeanu township. There are karst forms on which there are beech forests, sessile oaks, hornbeam, smoketrees, lilac, "dârmox" (*Viburnum lantana*), Turkish cherry, and rare specimens of *fritillaria meleagris* (*Fritillaria Montana*), being considered a monument of nature. There is also a rich underground water network, which is still insufficiently mapped, with significant excursions to Izverna, Bulba and the upper course of Coșuștea (here are the karstic springs with flows of 1000-2000 l / s), and major insurgencies at Ponoare (Zaton) and Jupânești ("at the lake"). Topolnita also falls underground on a short stretch. As lakes, the most important is the one from Balta, Topolnita.

Sfodea cave is located within the village of Sfodea, Balta township and was first explored in 1962. It is dug into the left slope of the Topolnita valley at 435 m altitude. It is a horizontal cave consisting of a 640m long gallery with subfossil and active portions developed on a diacalse system. It is a warm cave (11 ° C in July), with a high humidity level and slightly ventilated, the fauna being relatively rich: gastropods, isopods, acari. The cave is thus quite easy to cross (Bleahu et al., 1976).

The karst spring with the cliffed coasts of Camăna is a botanical reserve located in the north-eastern part of the Podeni township and has scientific and landscape interest.

Cornetul Bălții is a botanical reserve located in the north-eastern part of Balta township with a surface of 30 ha, with sub-Mediterranean pastures, which are of tourist and scientific interest.

In **Jupânești** area, the peri-panonic pastures are installed on the limestone hill on which the cornus mas predominantly grows (marking the Jurassic limestone alignment of the Danubian Autochthonous, situated on the NE-SW direction), situated between the unit of the plateaus (east) and the depressionary area (centre) of the Mehedinți Plateau. This limestone area is crossed by numerous rivers, such as Coșuștea, Topolnița, Camena, which form ravines and other limestone formations, called "cornete" (limestone hills on which the cornus mas predominantly grows), the most popular being Cornetul Cerboanii (810 m), Cornetul Babelor (770 m) and Cornetul Bălții (701 m); others, with a lower altitude (under 575 m), meet in the area of Ponoare: Răiculești, Băluța and Grădăneasa. Their vegetation is represented by *Syringa vulgaris*, *Fraxinus ornus* and *Cornus mas*, hence the name of "cornet" that these formations bear.

Also in Jupânești and Sfodea there are limestone meadows, xerophilous to mezoxerophilous, of Festuco-Brometea class. This habitat is formed in Mehedinți Plateau Geopark, from steppe or subcontinental meadows (*Festucetalia valesiaca*). These meadows are partially natural, partly anthropogenic: they are secondary meadows on the site of deforestation of sessile oak and hornbeam forests (*Brachypodio pinnati-Festucetum rupicolae* and *Danthonio-Brachypodietum pinnati*), secondary meadows installed on the site of orchards or abandoned or destroyed vineyards (*Agrostio-Festucetum valesiaca*).

In the **Cireșu and Jupânești** area there are also meadows used for hayfields dominated by *Agrostis capillaris*, with the absence of the species *Festuca rubra*. These phytocoenoses belong as. *Anthoxantho - Agrostetum capillare* Silinger 1933 (sin.: *Agrostetum tenuis* Szafer, Pawl et Kulkz 1923, *Agrostetum tenuis montanum* Isler 1933, *Agrostetum tenuis biharicum* Resmeriță 1965, *Festuceto-Agrostetum tenuis montanum* Csuros et Resmeriță 1960, *Hypochoeri radicatae-Agrostetum tenuis* I. Pop). They occupy plateaus, slopes, and

even higher terraces of the meadows. The association is very close to the floristic and areal composition as. *Festuco rubrae* - *Agrostetum capillare* Horvat 1951 (*Festuco-Agrostietum* Csűrös et Kaptalan 1964), which is why it is very difficult to delimit.

At the same time, at Cireșu, Sfodea and Jupânești there are Illyrian oak forests (*Quercus dalechampii*), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and silver lime (*Tilia tomentosa*) with hornbeam (*Erythronio-Carpinion*). These are developed on slopes with low and medium inclinations, with various exhibitions, valleys, ridges, plateaus, various rocks: molasse, marl, calcareous sandstone, on various types of soil: eutricambosol, deep, weak acid, basic, hydric, eutrophic.

Hygrophilic and nitrofile tall grass communities along the watercourses and woodsides, belonging to the orders *Glechometalia hederaceae* and *Convolvuletalia sepium* (*Senecion fluviatilis*, *Aegopodion podagrariae*, *Convolvulion sepium*, *Filipendulion*) may be found in Podeni.

Butterfly species *Callimorpha quadripunctaria* is commonly found in several localities, usually in glades, lizards, but also in orchards and gardens; it was reported as bright trap from Salvamont Ciresu Chalet. The bats *Myotis bechsteinii*, *Rhinolophus euryale* and *Myotis capaccinii* were reported in Cireșu. *Ciconia nigra*, *Falco peregrinus*, *Miniopterus schreibersii* were identified in the Topolnita complex.

ANTHROPIC ATTRACTIONS

"Topolnita Sfânta Cruce" Skete - historical monument and religious architecture, situated in a picturesque area on the top of the River Topolnita between the villages Lower Skete and Upper Skete in Izvoru Bârzii township, the skete was built in 1646 by Lupu Buliga, captain in the army of Matei Basarab. It was built on the foundation of an older skete from the period of Radu I (1377-1383). It has a valuable fresco dating back to 1672. In 1826, the skete was used as a shelter for the Pandurs of Tudor Vladimirescu. The building was rebuilt in 1866 and restored in 1929-1930 and 1991-1992.

Heritage elements related to human settlements are represented on the trail in Cireșu by means of the manor house, lime kilns in Jupânești, Wayside cross in Balta and Sfodea.

Feast of Topolnita Cave in Cireșu township.

TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

ACCOMODATION

Salvamont Ciresu Chalet

Near:

- The touristic pension Maria **, Bahna, 8 places. The pension is located in Bahna village, on the bank of Bahna river, when it flows into the Danube (at 17 km from Dr. Tr. Severin and 5 km from Orșova). The pension has parking, terrace on the waterfront, 4 rooms with own bathroom and TV. Contact: 0721251009, 0722849798.
- Maria Pension **, Ilovita, 10 places (5 double rooms). The pension offers parking, TV, bathroom with shower, fridge / minibar, restaurant, terrace. Contact: 0252314936
- Travellers can also stay in traditional houses where they can take part in household activities in the village of Ilovița.

FOOD

Near:

The restaurant of Maria Pension **, Ilovița offering traditional and fish dishes.

RECREATION

Near:

Water sports at Bahna as well as boating and fishing

SERVICES

Near:

Accommodation and catering services provided by pensions as well as parking

Tourist information through the visitor information centre from Baia de Aramă, Drobeta Turnu-Severin and Orșova, and through the visitor information centre of the Iron Gates Natural Park at Dubova

A4. Podeni-Topolova-Culmea Munților Mehedinți-Balta Cerbului-Gornenți-Podeni

The length of this trail is 41.0 km, the maximum altitude is 1132 m, the maximum slope is 23.3%, no traffic, on an 11% asphalted road and 89% of dirt road. The GPS coordinates are 44°52'42, 02"N and 22°32'36, 35"E.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAIL

The trail starts from the centre of Podeni township (38 km from Drobeta Turnu Severin on DJ607B and DC3, 36 km from Orșova on DN6 and DJ607C), follows the course of Bahna for 5 km and then starts ascending on Topolova to the ridge of the Mehedinți Mountains (km 14). From here follows the forest road above the Sarafinești hamlet, passes by a limestone burning furnace, and after the springs from Ciucioare, the trail slowly ascends to Colțul Pietrii (1228 m) and then follows the ridge until Balta Cerbului glade. After a small trip to the forest canton of the gorgeous glade below the peak Înălățu Mare (1301 m), the trail descends to the Gornenți village (km 36.5) and from here, on an asphalted road it returns to the centre of Podeni township.

ACCESS

- road: from E70 on national / communal roads: 38 km from Drobeta Turnu Severin on DJ 607B, and DC3, 36 km from Orșova - on DN6 then on DJ607C
- railway: thoroughfare 900 Craiova-Drobeta Turnu Severin-Orșova-Baile Herculane-Timisoara

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

NATURAL ATTRACTION

The karst spring with the cliffed coast from Camăna, botanical reserve with a surface of 25ha is located in the north-eastern part of Podeni township. It presents scientific and landscape interest due to the variety of karst phenomena (steep rocky slopes, sinkholes, limestone pavements, hydrokarst systems, valleys) of geological, floristic, fauna and landscape importance. The protected area is included in the Mehedinti Plateau Geopark and overlaps to the Natura 2000 site - Mehedinti Plateau. Here are the largest bodies of serpentinites (asbestos rocks) in the territory of our country (in the regions Plavișevița, Podeni, Obîrșia Cloșani, and so on).

The tourist importance of **Mehedinți Mountains** is given by the sedimentary formations represented by limestone, the clay shales, marlous limestone, micaceous sandstone, and so on. In the south and on the eastern steep there are metamorphic rocks: gneiss, mica schists, basic rocks, serpentine, all of which are arranged over the sedimentary rocks. The massive, reef limestone form the rocky, prominent relief of Piatra Cloșanilor and Culmea Domogled – Vâful lui Stan. Mountain tourism enthusiasts and geological studies can easily cross the massif on marked trails, although some pass through inaccessible areas at first glance. On some portions, the ridge is also crossed by the locals who go to the sheepfold or to the shelters on the ridges. The vegetation of these mountains includes species of thermophilous plants such as lilac, fraxinus ornus, hornbeam, xanthium spinosum, Turkish hazel, as well as some rare species, including *Malus trilobata*, *Taxus baccata* and the tulip.

Within the Mehedinți Mountains two main ridges are distinguished: a ridge highlighted by the peaks: Ferigari (928 m), **Colțul Pietrii (1229 m)**, Ciolanu Mare (1135 m) and Ciolanu Mic (1048 m), and the second by the peaks Costegu Mare (1325 m), Piatra Alba (1335 m) and Bruscan (1300 m).

Balta Cerbului, a huge glade on which it can be also found a forest canton, now enclosed, a pavilion, a table with wooden benches, is an 800-meter-long limestone island guarded by the peaks Înălățu Mic (1.146m) and Înălățu Mare (1,301 m). The legend says that under one of the peaks there is a cross around which Cerbul stream passes, and because the stream bed is not clearly delineated and the slope is very small, sometimes the water spreads through almost the whole forest, hence the name of Balta Cerbului.

A spring with a roof and a bench may be found in the point **La Ciucioare**. Belvedere points are from Serafinești hamlet, overlooking towards the Valley of Bahna and the Mehedinți Plateau, and **La Ciucioare**, overlooking towards the Mehedinți Plateau up to the Danube.

Hygrophilic and nitrofile tall grass communities along the watercourses and woodsides, belonging to the orders Glechometalia hederaceae and Convolvuletalia sepium (*Senecio fluviatilis*, *Aegopodion podagrariae*, *Convolvulion sepium*, *Filipendulion*) may be found in Podeni.

Medio-european beech forests from Cephalanthero-Fagion are the subtermophile beech forests of the South-western part of the country, which represents a transition between the Carpathian Foothills (*Symphyto-Fagion*) and the Iliric (*Aremonio-Fagion*) and are extrazonal in our country, because they occur exclusively on carbonate substrates. The area under investigation was the limestone bar that spreads starting from Camena (**Colțul Pietrii**) up to Motru Sec.

ANTHROPIC ATTRACTIONS

Traditional households with specific architecture are located in Ilovița, Seliște, Cireșu, Bahna, **Podeni**, Ponoare, Balta, Obsia Cloșani, with many traditional festivals and fairs.

TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

ACCOMODATION

Near:

- Tourist Pension Maria **, Bahna, 8 places. The pension is located in Bahna Village, on the bank of the Bahna river, when it flows into the Danube River (17 km from Dr. Tr. Severin and 5 km from Orșova). The pension has parking, terrace on the waterfront, 4 rooms with own bathroom and TV.

Contact: 0721251009, 0722849798.

- Pension Maria **, Ilovița, 10 places (5 double rooms). The pension offers parking, TV, bathroom with shower, refrigerator / minibar, restaurant, terrace. Contact: 0252314936

- Casa Albă Pension**, Victoriei Street, no. 44, Baia de Aramă, 12 places (5 rooms) TV, bathroom in each room; wireless internet; hot / cold water permanently; central heating system; mini conference room; refrigerator; covered terrace; courtyard (outdoor barbecue); parking. Contact: 0752 234 522

- Pension Maria Elena **, Principala Street, no. 87, Ponoarele Township, Mehedinti County, 227360, 12 places (6 rooms). Gym room and billiard table, Contact: 0752 112 711

- Conacu Boierului, Ponoarele no. 9, Ponoarele Township 20 places (10 rooms). Restaurant, parking, playground, fitness, pavilion, bicycles, ATVs, billiard, tennis table, pottery demonstrations
Contact: 0740057390, www.conacuboierului.ro

FOOD

Near:

- Restaurant from Pension Maria **, Ilovița offering traditional and fish dishes
- Restaurant from Casa Albă Pension **, Victoriei Street, no. 44, Baia de Aramă
- Restaurant from Conacu Boierului, Ponoarele no. 9, Ponoarele Township with traditional dishes

RECREATION

Near:

Water sports at Bahna as well as boating and fishing

Bicycles, ATVs, billiard, fitness, tennis table, pottery demonstrations at Ponoarele- Boierului Mansion

SERVICES

Near:

Accommodation and food services offered by pensions, as well as parking, bicycles, ATVs.

Tourist information through the tourist information centres from Baia de Aramă and Drobeta Turnu-Severin and Orșova, and through the tourist information centre of the Iron Gate Natural Park at Dubova.

A6. Ponoarele-Cheile Băluței-Bala de Sus-Bratovoiești-Baia de Arama-Gărdăneasa-Ponoarele

The length of this trail is 36.0 km, the maximum altitude is 588m and the maximum slope is 20.5%, with moderate traffic, on a 25% asphalted road and 75% of dirt road. The GPS coordinates are 44°58'29, 98"N and 22°45'41, 26"E.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAIL

The trail starts in the centre of Ponoarele (62 km from Drobeta Turnu Severin, on DN67 and then on DJ670 and 72 km from Baile Herculane, on DN67D and then on DJ670), at the God's bridge, passes by the lilac forest and then descends to Băluța village (km 3). From Băluța the trail follows the ravines and then Băluța valley downstream to Bala de Sus village, then passes through the villages under the mountains (Bratovoiești, Molani, Pistrița) and descends to Baia de Aramă. From Baia de Aramă it ascends intensely to Gărdăneasa, and finally descends to Ponoarele.

ACCESS

- road: from E70 on national / communal roads: 62 km from Drobeta Turnu Severin, on DN67 and then on DJ670 and 72 km from Baile Herculane, on DN67D and then on DJ670
- railway: thoroughfare 900 Craiova-Drobeta-Turnu Severin-Orsova-Baile Herculane-Timisoara

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

Ponorele karst complex is a complex reserve located 5 km southeast of Baia de Aramă. Here are the most diverse and original karstic phenomena in our country: caves, steephead valleys, limestone pavements, a natural arcade that forms the natural bridge Ponoarele. The reserve from Ponoarele has an area of 100 ha and due to its scientific importance it has been declared a monument of nature.

God's Bridge, Category III IUCN, a natural touristic attraction, is the largest natural bridge in the country and the second in Europe, being a remain of the crash of a portion from the Ceiling of the Bridge's cave.

Ponoarele Cave, also known as the Cave at the God's Bridge, the Cave at the Bridge, Bridge's Cave or the Cave from the Stone Bridge, is accessible to tourists and can be visited all year round; it is in an advanced degree of destruction with a large number of broken stalactites and dislodged stalagmites from the fossil gallery.

The cave is situated at an altitude of 337m; its length is 734m and is a hydrogeological breakthrough made by the waters that gather in Zăton lake. It has two large entrances. The main gallery is subfossil, and at a higher level there is a fossil gallery. Inside, the cave has a pit cave and a sinkhole which has an excess function, because when the water level in Zăton lake increases, the water rises by flooding the cave so that it can flow gradually along with the decrease in level of Zăton lake. The fossil gallery has large spaces and is richly concreted with stalagmites, stalactites, very long curtains and fistular stalactites. Ponoarele Cave is the work of Zăton's waters, which once drained through the galleries as well as under the Natural Bridge archway, being detached now from the rest of the cave after a collapse.

Bulba cave is a mixed, sub-horizontal cave, consisting of a network of three-storey galleries that stretch under the territory of Ponoarele, in the Jurassic Neocomian limestone of the hills Brăzișori and Cornetul Mare, at a distance of 5100 m. It is framed in the category of large caves of the country occupying the 15th place. It is located at an altitude of 325m, at the level of the valley of Bulba stream, on the base of the right slope of the homonymous valley on the DJ 670 at the exit from Baia de Aramă to the Ponoarele township. It is a large cave (4 km) with 2 floors, an active and a fossil one noted in the literature for the diversity and beauty of speleothems, especially draperies (or veils) among the most beautiful in the country.

There is also a rich underground water network, which is still insufficiently mapped, with significant exurgency to Izverna, Bulba and on the upper course of Coșuștea (here are the karstic springs with flows of 1000-2000 l / s), and major insurgencies at Ponoarele (Zăton) . Many of the lakes have temporary character and are flooded depressions: Ponoarele Lake, Zăton Mare and Mic Lakes.

Zăton Lake (Zătonul Mare), temporary lake (the lake has moments when it is full, but also moments during summer when it is completely dry) of karst origin, it is situated in the upstream depression of **Ponoare Cave** in Mehedinți Plateau, connected to the hydrographic system of the cave (**the Cave at the God's Bridge** or the **Cave from the Stone Bridge**), stretches in precipitation seasons on a few hectares, below the 350-meter altitude of the depression.

The water can remain in the lake for many years when the dives are covered with alluviums from the hillsides. As a karst phenomenon, Zaton Lake has particular peculiar features, in the rainy spring, immediately after snow melting, it can reach impersonal dimensions: 2,5 km long, a surface of 2 km² and 20 m deep at the maximum. The depression of Ponoarele, known by the locals as **Zătonul Mic**, with an area of 0.8 km², has an elongated shape, extending from the Turkish Valley to the Valley of Mills, where in the case of abundant precipitation it is formed a lake of much reduced dimensions in comparison to those of Zătonul Mare.

Fields of limestone pavement: Dealul Peșterii, Brăzișori, Cornetul Mare - high limestone hills on which the cornus mas predominantly grows with conical, tronconic or ridge-like shapes. The limestone pavements are dissolution compositions in the form of separate ditches which are more or less wide or in the form of excavations with the appearance of small elliptical or circular basins. They are formed both on the nude limestone and under the soil cover, with individual forms or groups known as fields of limestone pavement being distinguished. Cleopatra and Aphrodite fields of limestone pavement in Ponoarele are unique in Romania by their size, compactness and altitude (less than 600 meters), being characteristic for the Alps.

Băluța Ravines are the only ravines of greater size and importance from the territory of Ponoarele, with a length of about 1 km. They are in the proximity of Băluța village, being bordered by Băluța and Râieni limestone hills on which the cornus mas predominantly grows, with altitudes of the limestone walls between 300-400m. Through Băluța Ravines is accomplished the connection with the spa resort of Bala, following a beautiful wooded path favouring the practice of bicycle touring. In 1967 here were filmed sequences for the Romanian film "The Dacians".

Băluța Cave located in Băluța village on Băluța Ravines, has two floors: one flooded almost all the time and the other above it, a fossil floor with different karst formations. The cave has a length of 248m, being a temporary active karst spring, located near the thalweg of Rîieni valley. Its galleries develop on two floors, the lower one consisting of a succession of siphons, with pressure pipes flooded almost all year round. The fossil floor, developed in the final part of the cave, is linked to the first one by intersections of galleries and wells; it presents collapsed areas and forms of concretion.

The lilac forest Botanical Reserve, 20 ha, IUCN IV class on Ponoarele limestone hill on which the cornus mas predominantly grows, is a favourable habitat due to the humid and gentle climate of the depression which is protected by the ridges of Mehedinti. This reservation is located in the Mehedinti Karst Plateau area, in an intermountain depression where numerous calcareous ponors occur. The 20 ha of the lilac forest have been declared a monument of nature since 1965, an integral part of the protected area "Mehedinti Plateau Geopark".

The peripanonic pastures are located on the limestone hills on which the cornus mas predominantly grows (marking the Jurassic limestone alignment of the Danubian Autochthonous, situated on the NE-SW direction), situated between the unit of the plateaus (east) and the depressionary area (centre) of the Mehedinți Plateau. This limestone area is crossed by numerous rivers, such as Coșuștea, Topolnița, Camena, which form ravines and other limestone formations, called "cornete" (limestone hills on which the cornus mas predominantly grows), the most popular being Cornetul Cerboanii (810 m), Cornetul Babelor (770 m) and Cornetul Bălții (701 m); others, with a lower altitude (under 575 m), meet in the area of Ponoare: Răiculești, Băluța and Grădăneasa. Their vegetation is represented by *Syringa vulgaris*, *Fraxinus ornus* and *Cornus mas*, hence the name of "cornet" that these formations bear.

Limestone meadows, xerophilous to mezoxerophilous, of Festuco-Brometea class. This habitat is formed in Mehedinti Plateau Geopark, from steppe or subcontinental meadows (*Festucetalia valesiacae*). These meadows are partially natural, partly anthropogenic: they are secondary meadows on the site of deforestation of sessile oak and hornbeam forests (*Brachypodio pinnati-Festucetum rupicolae* and *Danthonio-Brachypodietum pinnati*), secondary meadows installed on the site of orchards or abandoned or destroyed vineyards (*Agrostio-Festucetum valesiacae*).

In the studied territory there are also meadows used for hayfields dominated by *Agrostis capillaris*, with the absence of the species *Festuca rubra*. These phytocoenoses belong as. Anthoxantho - *Agrostetum capillare* Silinger 1933 (sin.: *Agrostetum tenuis* Szafer, Pawl et Kulkz 1923, *Agrostetum tenuis montanum* Isler 1933, *Agrostetum tenuis biharicum* Resmeriță 1965, *Festuceto-Agrostetum tenuis montanum* Csuros et Resmeriță 1960, *Hypochoeri radicatae-Agrostetum tenuis* I. Pop). They occupy plateaus, slopes, and even higher terraces of the meadows. The association is very close to the floristic and areal composition as. *Festuco rubrae - Agrostetum capillare* Horvat 1951 (*Festuco-Agrostetum* Csűrös et Kaptalan 1964), which is why it is very difficult to delimit. Ponoars

In addition to flora species, fauna species, such as *Rhinolophus Euryale*, *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, are added.

ANTHROPIC ATTRACTIONS

Ponoarele tourist village is an ethnographic centre where you can see: the popular architecture, the wooden houses made in the traditional architecture of the plateau area, the water mills, the folk art, the popular art. It is also a folkloric centre representative for: traditional folk, calendaristic (winter) and family customs, pastoral festivals, folk dances.

Baia de Arama Folk Art Center – Within this centre, traditional folk manifestations occur such as the folk music and dance festival "Plaiurile Cloșanilor" which takes place on May 15th - 16th.

The wooden church dedicated to St. Nicholas (1766) is a religious tourist attraction from Ponoarele, and was declared historic monument. The oak wooden church was built in 1763 with the appearance of a wooden cottage with a church porch supported by four pillars. According to the legend, the church is erected to the site where, in the XIVth century, the monk Nicodemus wanted to build the present Tismana monastery.

Cultural patrimony of the rural settlements of Ponoare: **the assembly of water mills** (three wooden mills) – **Moara Crăucenilor** (wooden mill with well bucket) from Ponoarele village, on the valley of Ponoarele River from the XIXth century.

Traditions at Ponoarele: "Calendarul Babelor" (Old Women Calendar) with "empirically feasts" (Celebrations of the dead - Winter, Summer, Autumn), the Onion Calendar to see how the crops of that year will be, and the fortune telling using dishes practised in the New Year's Eve. The exploitations of copper ores have been known in this area since antiquity.

Baia de Aramă monastery (the treasure of Brâncoveanu family), dedicated to the Saint Voivodes Mihail and Gavril, is located in the homonymous locality. Being built between 1694-1703, by famous ktetors, the church from Baia de Arama has been well preserved until today.

Baia de Arama is crossed by Brebina River, which enlivens the nature and the former copper mines. In this place, the ruler Mircea the Elder brought Saxon craftsmen. Due to its location on a commercial road crossing Wallachia, towards the end of the XVIIth century, the village became a fairy (town).

The feast of the Lilac from the first part of May begins with the hora (a traditional Romanian folk dance) of the village, and the next day on the specially arranged stage, right in the middle of the lilac forest, professional and amateur artistic ensembles come, together with popular folk musicians from the area of Mehedinți and Gorj.

Folk Music Festival Ponoare, Ponoare! where the folk ensemble "Liliac de la Ponoare" (from Ponoarele commune) come on the stage.

TOURISTIC INFRASTRUCTURE

ACCOMMODATION

Casa Albă Pension**, Victoriei Street, no. 44, Baia de Aramă, 12 places (5 rooms), TV, bathroom in each room; wireless internet; hot / cold water permanently; central heating system; mini conference room; refrigerator; covered terrace; courtyard (outdoor barbecue); parking. Contact: 0752 234 522

- Izvorul Rece Pension – Brebina Village, no. 47, Baia de Aramă Town, Mehedinți County. Contact: 0252.381.509 <http://www.comtit.ro/>

- Maria Elena Pension **, Principala Street, no. 87, Ponoarele Township, Mehedinți County, 227360, 12 places (6 rooms). Gym room and billiard table. Contact: 0752 112 711

- Conacu Boierului, Ponoarele no. 9, Ponoarele Township, 20 places (10 rooms). Restaurant, parking, playground, fitness, pavilion, bicycles, ATVs, billiard, tennis table, pottery demonstrations, Contact: 0740057390, www.conacuboierului.ro

- Borloveanu Dumitru Pension**, Ponoarele No. 45 Contact: 0252.381.545

- Popescu Pension **, Ponoarele Contact: 0252 381 542

- Tourists can also accommodate in traditional houses where they can take part in the household activities in Ilovita Village.

FOOD

- Restaurant from Casa Albă Pension**, Victoriei Street, no. 44, Baia de Aramă

- Restaurant from Conacu Boierului, Ponoarele no. 9, Ponoarele Township with traditional dishes

RECREATION

Bicycles, ATVs, billiard, fitness, tennis table, pottery demonstrations at Ponoarele-Conacu Boierului

SERVICES

The accommodation and food services offered by pensions as well as parking, bicycles, ATVs.

Tourist information through the tourist information centres from Baia de Aramă and Drobeta Turnu-Severin and Orșova, and through the tourist information centre of the Iron Gate Natural Park at Dubova.

A7. Ponoarele- Băluța Ravines -Busești-Ponoarele

The length of this trail is 21.5 km, the maximum altitude is 562 m, the maximum slope is 21.6%, with moderate traffic, on a 33% asphalted road and 67% of dirt road. GPS coordinates are 44°58'29, 98"N and 22°45'41, 26"E.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAIL

The trail starts in the centre of Ponoarele (62 km from Drobeta.Turnu Severin, on DN67 and then on DJ670, at 72 km from Baile Herculane, on DN67D and then on DJ670) at the God's Bridge, passes by the lilac forest then descends to the village of Băluța (km 3). From Băluța, the trail follows Băluța Ravines and at the kilometre no. 7 it leaves the valley line, going to the right on a tributary. The trail follows the stream bed, at the kilometre no. 13 it reaches Busești village and from there descends to Băluța; the return to Ponoarele is done on Valea Morilor and thus the loop at the God's Bridge is closed.

ACCESS

- road: from E70 on national / communal roads: 62 km from Drobeta.Turnu Severin, on DN67 and then on DJ670, at 72 km from Baile Herculane, on DN67D and then on DJ670

- railway: thoroughfare 900 Craiova-Drobeta-Turnu Severin-Orsova-Baile Herculane-Timisoara

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

NATURAL ATTRACTION

Ponorele karst complex is a complex reserve located 5 km southeast of Baia de Aramă. Here are the most diverse and original karstic phenomena in our country: caves, steephead valleys, limestone pavements, a natural arcade that forms the natural bridge Ponoarele. The reserve from Ponoarele has an area of 100 ha and due to its scientific importance it has been declared a monument of nature.

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Cultural patrimony of the rural settlements of Ponoare: **the assembly of water mills** (three wooden mills) – **Moara Crăcucenilor** (wooden mill with well bucket) from Ponoarele village, on the valley of Ponoarele River from the XIXth century.

Traditions at Ponoarele: "Calendarul Babelor" (Old Women Calendar) with "empirically feasts" (Celebrations of the dead - Winter, Summer, Autumn), the Onion Calendar to see how the crops of that year will be, and the fortune telling using dishes practised in the New Year's Eve. The exploitations of copper ores have been known in this area since antiquity.

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The feast of the Lilac from the first part of May begins with the hora (a traditional Romanian folk dance) of the village, and the next day on the specially arranged stage, right in the middle of the lilac forest, professional and amateur artistic ensembles come, together with popular folk musicians from the area of Mehedinți and Gorj.

Folk Music Festival Ponoare, Ponoare! where the folk ensemble "Liliac de la Ponoare" (from Ponoarele commune) come on the stage.

TOURISTIC INFRASTRUCTURE

ACCOMODATION

- Casa Albă Pension**, Victoriei Street, no. 44, Baia de Aramă, 12 places (5 rooms), TV, bathroom in each room; wireless internet; hot / cold water permanently; central heating system; mini conference room; refrigerator; covered terrace; courtyard (outdoor barbeque); parking. Contact: 0752 234 522
- Izvorul Rece Pension – Brebina Village, no. 47, Baia de Aramă Town, Mehedinți County. Tel: 0252.381.509 <http://www.comtit.ro/>
- Maria Elena Pension **, Principala Street, no. 87, Ponoarele Township, Mehedinți County, 227360, 12 places (6 rooms). Gym room and billiard table Contact: 0752 112 711
- Conacu Boierului, Ponoarele no. 9, Ponoarele Township, 20 places (10 rooms). Restaurant, parking, playground, fitness, pavilion, bicycles, ATV, billiard, tennis table, pottery demonstrations, Contact: 0740057390, www.conacuboierului.ro

- Borloveanu Dumitru Pension**, Ponoarele No. 45 Tel: 0252.381.545
- Popescu Pension**, Ponoarele Tel.: 0252 381 542
- Tourists can also accommodate in traditional houses where they can take part in household activities in Ilovita Village.

FOOD

- Restaurant from Casa Albă Pension**, Victoriei Street, no. 44, Baia de Aramă
- Restaurant from Conacu Boierului, Ponoarele no. 9, Ponoarele Township with traditional dishes

RECREATION

Bicycles, ATVs, billiard, fitness, tennis table, pottery demonstrations at Ponoarele-Conacu Boierului

SERVICES

Accommodation and food services offered by pensions, as well as parking, bicycles, ATVs.

Tourist information through the tourist information centers in Baia de Aramă and Drobeta Turnu-Severin and Orșova, and through the tourist information center of the Iron Gate Natural Park at Dubova.

A8. Isverna- Nadanova- Cerna Vârf- Firizu- Dâlbocița- Busești- Isverna

The length of this trail is 51.2 km, the maximum altitude is 698 m, the maximum slope is 21.1%, moderate / non-existent traffic, on a 19% asphalted road and 81% of dirt road. The GPS coordinates are 44°58'45,73"N and 22°37'27,41"E.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAIL

The trail starts from the center of Isverna township (60 km from Drobeta Turnu Severin on DN67, then on DJ670 and then on DC50, 55 km from Baile Herculane, DN67D and then on DJ601E) to Giurgiani, and after 400m to the left, it ascends 3 km and then descends to Nadanova (km no. 6). From Nadanova it follows the course of Coșuștea River and from Cerna Vârf it crosses the ravines sector and after 15 km it reaches Dâlbocița (km no. 25). From Dâlbocița the road goes backwards, it ascends to the ridge of the hills and returns to Isverna passing through the Busești village and Seliște.

ACCESS

- road: from E70 on national / communal roads: 60 km from Drobeta Turnu Severin on DN67 then on DJ670 and then on DC50, 55 km from Baile Herculane on DN67D and then on DJ601E
- railway: thoroughfare 900 Craiova-Drobeta-Turnu Severin-Orsova-Baile Herculane-Timisoara

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

NATURAL ATTRACTION

The karstic phenomena from Isverna include: The Isverna cave, which houses a rich cavernicolous fauna and the Isverna karst spring under Dealul Cornetu, at an altitude of 390 m. It is a cave over 1.5 km long traveled by an underground stream. Isverna Cave has the longest network of underwater galleries in Romania. From Izverna Cave starts the largest karst spring in Mehedinți County. The cave is very difficult to explore because of the siphons, galleries and underground lakes. Up to now, two galleries are available in Izverna Cave.

In the depths of Izverna Cave it is believed to be buried the treasury of Serbia, when in the second half of the XIXth century the two hereditary princes, Milan Obrenovici and Mihail, were struggling for their throne. Izverna Cave exerts a special fascination. The clear water from the underground lakes that allow a great visibility and the underwater galleries make it an ideal place for diving, photography and underwater photography.

Natural reservation of flora, fauna and landscape geological type, **Cornetul Babelor și Cerboanei** is included in the IUCN IV category, located in the southern part of Isverna township, with an area of 40 ha. **The limestone walls from Coșuștea spring** are another botanical reservation located in the south-eastern part of Isverna township with an area of 60 ha. Both sites are of scientific and tourist interest due to the existence of sub-Mediterranean ecosystems.

Coșuștea Ravines form a protected area of national interest corresponding to IUCN category IV (natural reservation with geological and landscape character) in the Balta township. The natural reserve stretching over an area of 50 hectares was declared a protected area according to the Law No.5 of March 6th, 2000, and it is an area of dug ravines in the Jurassic limestones by the water of Coșuștea River (a right tributary of Motru river), rocky cliffs, screes, caves, sinkholes, limestone pavements and valleys, with flora and fauna specific to the Mehedinți Plateau.

The limestone walls from Coșuștea springs are a protected area of national interest corresponding to the IVth IUCN category (natural reservation with geological, botanical and landscape character) located in Mehedinți County, on the administrative territory of the Balta township. It features a relief with calcareous cliffs, valleys, ravines, sinkholes, forests and meadows.

There are also hydrographic elements such as the underground water in the mountain area Vârciorova - **Nadanova-Ponoare**.

A big part of the limestone within the Mehedinți Mountains and Plateau is deforested or covered with hawthorn, horn, blackthorn, smoketrees, juniper and lilac, in a mixture with isolated beeches. In many places the wild lilac forms true forests, such as those on Isverna, Nadanova or Ponoarele limestone hills on which the cornus mas predominantly grows

The vegetation in Isverna has several characteristic groups as follows:

- The peripanonic pastures are located on the limestone hills on which the cornus mas predominantly grows (marking the Jurassic limestone alignment of the Danubian Autochthonous, situated on the NE-SW direction), situated between the unit of the plateaus (east) and the depressionary area (center) of the Mehedinți Plateau. This limestone area is crossed by numerous rivers, such as Coșuștea, Topolnița, Camena, which form ravines and other limestone formations, called "cornete" (limestone hills on which the cornus mas predominantly grows), the most popular being Cornetul Cerboanii (810 m), Cornetul Babelor (770 m) and Cornetul Băltii (701 m); others, with a lower altitude (under 575 m), meet in the area of Ponoare: Răiculești, Băluța and Grădăneasa. Their

vegetation is represented by *Syringa vulgaris*, *Fraxinus ornus* and *Cornus mas*, hence the name of “cornet” that these formations bear.

Limestone meadows, xerophilous to mezoxerophilous, of Festuco-Brometea class. This habitat is formed in Mehedinti Plateau Geopark, from steppe or subcontinental meadows (*Festucetalia valesiacae*). These meadows are partially natural, partly anthropogenic: they are secondary meadows on the site of deforestation of sessile oak and hornbeam forests (*Brachypodio pinnati-Festucetum rupicolae* and *Danthonio-Brachypodietum pinnati*), secondary meadows installed on the site of orchards or abandoned or destroyed vineyards (*Agrostio-Festucetum valesiacae*)

- Hygrophilic and nitrofile tall grass communities along the watercourses and woodsides, belonging to the orders *Glechometalia hederaceae* and *Convolvuletalia sepium* (*Senecion fluviatilis*, *Aegopodion podagrariae*, *Convolvulion sepium*, *Filipendulion*);

- The habitat develops on medium to severely inclined slopes, with different exhibitions, on ridges, limestone rocks, limestone sandstones, mesozoic conglomerates and mesozoic magmatic intrusions, deep brown soils with a lot of gravel and on moderately acidic soils, heavily levigated, poor in humus. It is represented by a wood largely populated with beech trees belonging to cl. *Fagetalia sylvaticae* Pawlowski in Pawlowski et al. 1928: Medio-European beech forests with *Luzula luzuloides*, being erected by *Fagus sylvatica* and having as characteristic species the *Festuca drymeia*.

Taking into consideration the fact that the subtermophile beech forests in the south-western part of the country represent a transition between the Carpathian Foothills (*Symphyto-Fagion*) and the Iliric (*Aremonio-Fagion*) and are extrazonal in our country, because they occur exclusively on carbonate substrates. The area under investigation was the limestone bar that spreads starting from Camena (**Colțul Pietrii**) up to Motru Sec. The habitat is represented by the Romanian variant: R4111 Southeastern beech forests of the Carpathians (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Fir (*Abies alba*) with *Cephalanthera damasonium*.

The subtermophile beech forests in the south-western part of the country represent a transition between the Carpathian Foothills (*Symphyto-Fagion*) and the Iliric (*Aremonio-Fagion*) and are extrazonal in our country, because they occur exclusively on carbonate substrates. The Natura 2000 91K0 habitat is represented in the Geopark territory by the variants: R4112 Balkan Beech Forests (*Fagus sylvatica*) with *Aremonia agrimonoides*; R4115 Balkan Beech Forests (*Fagus sylvatica*) with *Geranium macrorrhizum*; R4121 Balkan Beech Forests (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Turkish hazel (*Corylus colurna*) with *Knautia drymeia*.

The limestone or marlous screes in the hill and mountain levels that extend into the mountain regions (alpine and subalpine), often in dry and warm resorts, in association with the vegetal communities of *Stipetalia calamagrostis*.

The fauna of Isverna area features stone crayfish, *Austropotamobius torrentium*, and *Miniopterus schreibersii* bent-wing bats.

ANTHROPIC ATTRACTIONS

The ethnographic cultural heritage of this trail is represented by mansions and wayside crosses at Isverna. **The Wooden Church “The Holy Voivodes”, in Isverna**, Drăghești village, Isverna township, is a historical and a religious folk architectural monument. The church was built in 1783 and restored in 1823. The interior painting dates back to 1892.

Isverna Ethnographic Center is distinguished by folk architecture and technique, the traditional structure, wooden houses made in the traditional architecture of the plateau, water mills in operation, folk art, folk costumes.

Isverna Folk Art Center – There are organized here traditional folk, calendaristic (winter) and family manifestations.

Legends of Cerna Vârf area, an ancient settlement, mention several treasures buried here. And the elders of the village still remember the strange disappearances and deaths that have taken place over time in these places.

TOURISTIC INFRASTRUCTURE

ACCOMODATION

- Steaua Munților Pension***, Isverna Township, 14 rooms (12 double and 2 triple). Traditional restaurant and homemade dishes, a natural size synthetic football field with lockers and stands, plus a playground for children, Phone: (+40) 0756 322.095, <http://www.steauamuntilorisverna.com/>
- Casa Albă Pension**, Victoriei Street, no. 44, Baia de Aramă, 12 places (5 rooms), TV, bathroom in each room; wireless internet; hot / cold water permanently; central heating system; mini conference room; refrigerator; covered terrace; courtyard (outdoor barbeque); parking. Contact: 0752 234 522
- Izvorul Rece Pension – Brebina Village, no.47, Baia de Aramă Town, Mehedinți County. Tel: 0252.381.509 <http://www.comtit.ro/>
- Maria Elena Pension**, Principala Street, no. 87, Ponoarele Township, Mehedinți County, 227360, 12 places (6 rooms). Gym room and billiard table, Contact: 0752 112 711
- Conacu Boierului, Ponoarele no. 9, Ponoarele Township, 20 places (10 rooms). Restaurant, parking, playground, fitness, pavilion, bicycles, ATVs, billiard, tennis table, pottery demonstrations
Contact: 0740057390, www.conacuboierului.ro
- Borloveanu Dumitru Pension**, Ponoarele No. 45 Tel: 0252.381.545
- Tourists can also accommodate in traditional houses where they can take part in household activities in Ilovita Village.

FOOD

- Traditional restaurant and homemade dishes at Steaua Munților Isverna
- Restaurant from Casa Albă Pension**, Victoriei Street, no. 44, Baia de Aramă
- Conacu Boierului Restaurant, Ponoarele no. 9, Ponoarele Township with traditional dishes

RECREATION

Bicycles, ATVs, billiard, fitness, tennis table, pottery demonstrations at Ponoarele-Conacu Boierului
Football field and children's playground at Steaua Munților Isverna

SERVICES

- Accommodation and food services provided by pensions, as well as parking, bicycles, ATVs.
- Tourist information through the tourist information centers from Baia de Aramă and Drobeta Turnu-Severin and Orșova, and through the tourist information center of the Iron Gate Natural Park at Dubova

A9. Isverna- Seliște- Valea Verde- Godeanu- Obârșia Cloșani- Stănești- Bârâiacu-Valea Ursului- Nadanova- Gornovița- Isverna

The length of this trail is 49.3 km, the maximum altitude is 698 m, the maximum slope is 16.4%, with moderate traffic, on a 74% asphalted road and 26% of dirt road. The GPS coordinates are 44°58'45,73"N and 22°37'27,41"E.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAIL

The trail starts from the center of Isverna township (60 km from Severin on DN67 then on DJ670 then on DC50, 55 km from Baile Herculane on DN67D + DJ601E), in the Seliște village, it heads northwards to Valea Verde up to Godeanu (km 8), then follows a long descent to Stănești (km 20), and from here it begins the ascent to Bârâiacu. From Bârâiacu the trail descends to Valea Ursului, followed by the county road to Nadanova, where it turns right to Gornovița. From Gornovița (km 43) the route passes over Dealul Goronului and returns to Isverna.

ACCESS

- road: from E70 on national / communal roads: 60 km from Severin on DN67, then on DJ670, then on DC50, 55 km from Baile Herculane, on DN67D + DJ601E
- railway: thoroughfare 900 Craiova-Drobeta-Turnu Severin-Orsova-Baile Herculane-Timisoara

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

Borovăț Forest is a forest reserve located in the Godeanu township, 2.5 km northwest from Balotești village, on the left slope of the Topolnita valley. Its surface is 30 ha, on which the black beech and pine from Banat is well developed, which comes from a natural regeneration, a fact unique to this species in Mehedinți County.

Topolnița Ravines a botanical reservation, with a surface of 60-ha, is located in the south part of Godeanu township. There are karst forms on which there are beech forests, sessile oaks, hornbeam, smoketrees, lilac, "dârmox" (*Viburnum lantana*), Turkish cherry, and rare specimens of fritillaria meleagris (*Fritillaria Montana*), being considered a monument of nature.

A temporary **karst lake** is **Gornovița**.

On the edge of the limestone cornices, the rivers that come from the west, from waterproof foundations, are captured in the underground, through ponors and caves, forming, downstream, dry valleys, and upstream, **karst depressions with alluvial stretched wet meadows** (Pețimea, Ponorăț , **Prejna-Gornovița**, **Izverna-Nadanova**, Zăton, Ponoarele).

The vegetation in the perimeter of Godeanu township is as follows:

- Limestone meadows, xerophilous to mezoxerophilous, of Festuco-Brometea class. This habitat is formed in Mehedinți Plateau Geopark, from steppe or subcontinental meadows (*Festucetalia valesiaca*). These meadows are partially natural, partly anthropogenic: they are secondary meadows on the site of deforestation of sessile oak and hornbeam forests (*Brachypodio pinnati-Festucetum rupicola* and *Danthonio-Brachypodietum pinnati*), secondary meadows installed on the site of orchards or abandoned or destroyed vineyards (*Agrostio-Festucetum valesiaca*).

- The subtermophile beech forests in the south-western part of the country represent a transition between the Carpathian Foothills (Symphyto-Fagion) and the Iliric (Aremonio-Fagion) and are extrazonal in our country, because they occur exclusively on carbonate substrates. The Natura 2000 91K0 habitat is represented in the Geopark territory by the variants: R4112 Balkan Beech Forests (*Fagus sylvatica*) with *Aremonia agrimonoides*; R4115 Balkan Beech Forests (*Fagus sylvatica*) with *Geranium macrorrhizum*; R4121 Balkan Beech Forests (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Turkish hazel (*Corylus colurna*) with *Knautia drymeia*.

The karstic phenomena from Isverna include: **Isverna cave**, which houses a rich cavernicolous fauna and the **Isverna karst spring** under Dealul Cornetu, at an altitude of 390 m. It is a cave over 1.5 km long traveled by an underground stream. Isverna Cave has the longest network of underwater galleries in Romania.

From Izverna Cave starts the largest karst spring in Mehedinți County. The cave is very difficult to explore because of the siphons, galleries and underground lakes. Up to now, two galleries are available in Izverna Cave.

In the depths of Izverna Cave it is believed to be buried the treasury of Serbia, when in the second half of the XIXth century the two hereditary princes, Milan Obrenovici and Mihail, were struggling for their throne. Izverna Cave exerts a special fascination. The clear water from the underground lakes that allow a great visibility and the underwater galleries make it an ideal place for diving, photography and underwater photography.

Natural reservation of flora, fauna and landscape geological type, **Cornetul Babelor și Cerboanei** is included in the IUCN IV category, located in the southern part of Isverna township, with an area of 40 ha. **The limestone walls from Coșuștea spring** are another botanical reservation located in the south-eastern part of Isverna township with an area of 60 ha. Both sites are of scientific and tourist interest due to the existence of sub-Mediterranean ecosystems.

Coșuștea Ravines form a protected area of national interest corresponding to IUCN category IV (natural reservation with geological and landscape character) in the Balta township. The natural reserve stretching over an area of 50 hectares was declared a protected area according to the Law No.5 of March 6th, 2000, and it is an area of dug ravines in the Jurassic limestones by the water of Coșuștea River (a right tributary of Motru river), rocky cliffs, screes, caves, sinkholes, limestone pavements and valleys, with flora and fauna specific to the Mehedinți Plateau.

The limestone walls from Coșuștea springs are a protected area of national interest corresponding to the IVth IUCN category (natural reservation with geological, botanical and landscape character) located in Mehedinți County, on the administrative territory of the Balta township. It features a relief with calcareous cliffs, valleys, ravines, sinkholes, forests and meadows. There are also hydrographic elements such as the underground water in the mountain area Vârciorova - **Nadanova**-Ponoare.

A big part of the limestone within the Mehedinți Mountains and Plateau is deforested or covered with hawthorn, horn, blackthorn, smoketrees, juniper and lilac, in a mixture with isolated beeches. In many places the wild lilac forms true forests, such as those on Isverna, Nadanova or Ponoarele limestone hills on which the cornus mas predominantly grows

The vegetation in Isverna has several characteristic groups as follows:

- The peripanonic pastures are located on the limestone hills on which the cornus mas predominantly grows (marking the Jurassic limestone alignment of the Danubian Autochthonous, situated on the NE-SW direction), situated between the unit of the plateaus (east) and the depressionary area (center) of the Mehedinți Plateau. This limestone area is crossed by numerous rivers, such as Coșuștea, Topolnița, Camena, which form ravines and other limestone formations, called "cornete" (limestone hills on which the cornus mas predominantly grows), the most popular being Cornetul Cerboanii (810 m), Cornetul Babelor (770 m) and Cornetul Bălții (701 m); others, with a lower altitude (under 575 m), meet in the area of Ponoare: Răiculești, Băluța and Grădăneasa. Their vegetation is represented by *Syringa vulgaris*, *Fraxinus ornus* and *Cornus mas*, hence the name of "cornet" that these formations bear.

Limestone meadows, xerophilous to mezoxerophilous, of Festuco-Brometea class. This habitat is formed in Mehedinti Plateau Geopark, from steppe or subcontinental meadows (*Festucetalia valesiaca*). These meadows are partially natural, partly anthropogenic: they are secondary meadows on the site of deforestation of sessile oak and hornbeam forests (*Brachypodio pinnati-Festucetum rupicolae* and *Danthonio-Brachypodietum pinnati*), secondary meadows installed on the site of orchards or abandoned or destroyed vineyards (*Agrostio-Festucetum valesiaca*)

- Hygrophilic and nitrofile tall grass communities along the watercourses and woodsides, belonging to the orders *Glechometalia hederaceae* and *Convolvuletalia sepium* (*Senecion fluviatilis*, *Aegopodion podagrariae*, *Convolvulion sepium*, *Filipendulion*);

- The habitat develops on medium to severely inclined slopes, with different exhibitions, on ridges, limestone rocks, limestone sandstones, mesozoic conglomerates and mesozoic magmatic intrusions, deep brown soils with a lot of gravel and on moderately acidic soils, heavily leigated, poor in humus. It is represented by a wood largely populated with beech trees belonging to cl. *Fagetalia sylvaticae* Pawlowski in Pawlowski et al. 1928: Medio-European beech forests with *Luzula luzuloides*, being erected by *Fagus sylvatica* and having as characteristic species the *Festuca drymeia*. Taking into consideration the fact that the subtermophile beech forests in the south-western part of the country represent a transition between the Carpathian Foothills (*Symphyto-Fagion*) and the Iliric (*Aremonio-Fagion*) and are extrazonal in our country, because they occur exclusively on carbonate substrates. The area under investigation was the limestone bar that spreads starting from Camena (**Colțul Pietrii**) up to Motru Sec. The habitat is represented by the Romanian variant: R4111 Southeastern beech forests of the Carpathians (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Fir (*Abies alba*) with *Cephalanthera damasonium*.

- The subtermophile beech forests in the south-western part of the country represent a transition between the Carpathian Foothills (*Symphyto-Fagion*) and the Iliric (*Aremonio-Fagion*) and are extrazonal in our country, because they occur exclusively on carbonate substrates. The Natura 2000 91K0 habitat is represented in the Geopark territory by the variants: R4112 Balkan Beech Forests (*Fagus sylvatica*) with *Aremonia agrimonoides*; R4115 Balkan Beech Forests (*Fagus sylvatica*) with *Geranium macrorrhizum*; R4121 Balkan Beech Forests (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Turkish hazel (*Corylus colurna*) with *Knautia drymeia*.

The limestone or marlous screes in the hill and mountain levels that extend into the mountain regions (alpine and subalpine), often in dry and warm resorts, in association with the vegetal communities of *Stipetalia calamagrostis*.

The fauna of Isverna area features stone crayfish, *Austropotamobius torrentium*, and *Miniopterus schreibersii* bent-wing bats.

ANTHROPIC ATTRACTIONS

The ethnographic cultural heritage of this trail is represented by mansions and wayside crosses at Isverna. **The Wooden Church “The Holy Voivodes”, in Isverna**, Drăghești village, Isverna township, is a historical and religious folk architectural monument. The church was built in 1783 and restored in 1823. The interior painting dates back to 1892.

Isverna Ethnographic Center is distinguished by folk architecture and technique, the traditional structure, wooden houses made in the traditional architecture of the plateau, water mills in operation, folk art, folk costumes.

Isverna Folk Art Center – There are organized here traditional folk, calendaristic (winter) and family manifestations.

Legends of Cerna Vârf area, an ancient settlement, mention several treasures buried here. And the elders of the village still remember the strange disappearances and deaths that have taken place over time in these places.

The Wooden Church “The Holy Voivodes”, in Godeanu is a historical and religious folk architectural monument dating from 1783 to 1786.

The wooden church dedicated to St. Nicholas (1766) in Godeanu

The wooden church dedicated to St. Stephen (1796-1799) in Gornovița

TOURISTIC INFRASTRUCTURE

ACCOMODATION

- Vila Cerbul Pension, Godeanu Village, No. 10, 227331 Godeanu, Romania, 2 bedrooms. Parking, terrace, flat-screen TV with satellite channels and 1 bathroom. The kitchenette is equipped with a toaster and a microwave. A continental breakfast is provided daily.
- Steaua Munților Pension***, Isverna Township, 14 rooms (12 double and 2 triple). Traditional restaurant and homemade dishes, a natural size synthetic football field with lockers and stands, plus a playground for children, Phone: (+40) 0756 322.095, <http://www.steauamuntilorisverna.com/>
- Casa Albă Pension**, Victoriei Street, no. 44, Baia de Aramă, 12 places (5 rooms), TV, bathroom in each room; wireless internet; hot / cold water permanently; central heating system; mini conference room; refrigerator; covered terrace; courtyard (outdoor barbeque); parking. Contact: 0752 234 522
- Izvorul Rece Pension – Brebina Village, no.47, Baia de Aramă Town, Mehedinți County. Tel: 0252.381.509 <http://www.comtit.ro/>
- Maria Elena Pension**, Principala Street, no. 87, Ponoarele Township, Mehedinți County, 227360, 12 places (6 rooms). Gym room and billiard table, Contact: 0752 112 711
- Conacu Boierului, Ponoarele no. 9, Ponoarele Township, 20 places, (10 rooms). Restaurant, parking, playground, fitness room, pavilion, bicycles, ATVs, billiard, tennis table, pottery demonstrations, Contact: 0740057390, www.conacuboierului.ro
- Tourists can also accommodate in traditional houses where they can take part in household activities in Ilovita Village.

FOOD

- Traditional restaurant and homemade dishes at Steaua Munților Isverna
- Restaurant from Casa Albă Pension **, Victoriei Street, no. 44, Baia de Aramă
- Conacu Boierului Restaurant, Ponoarele no. 9, Ponoarele Township with traditional dishes

RECREATION

- Bicycles, ATVs, billiard, fitness, tennis table, pottery demonstrations at Ponoarele-Conacu Boierului
- Football field and children's playground at Steaua Munților Isverna

SERVICES

- Accommodation and food services offered by pensions, as well as parking, bicycles, ATVs.
- Tourist information through the tourist information centers from Baia de Aramă and Drobeta Turnu-Severin and Orșova, and through the tourist information center of the Iron Gate Natural Park at Dubova.

5.2. Electric mountain touring bike trails in Clisura Dunării and Almăj Mountains

B1. Dubova- Mraconia- Bigăr- Poiana Ravna- Valea Ponicevei- Dubova

The length of this trail is 62.3 km, the maximum altitude is 829 m, the maximum slope is 18.8%, with moderate / non-existent traffic, on a 11% asphalted road and 89% of dirt road. The GPS coordinates are 44°36'41,53"N and 22°15'09,01"E.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAIL

The trail starts from the centre of Dubova township, at about 25 km from Orșova, on DN57, Km 6, Mraconia Monastery, Rock sculpture of Decebalus, it follows a slight ascent from Mraconia Valley up to kilometre no. 20, it leaves the riverbed and rises to the kilometre no. 29, then it follows a slight descent up to Bigar village (km 40). The trail returns 3 km along the same route, and then follows the tourist path – red band to Poniceva Valley, passing through Ravna Glade.

ACCESS

- Road: from E70 on national / communal roads: 25 km from Orșova on DN57
- railway: thoroughfare 900 Craiova-Drobeta-Turnu Severin-Orșova-Baile Herculane-Timisoara

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

The Lower Sector of the Danube (the Romanian one), with a length of 1075 km, begins with the spectacular and impressive Iron Gates defile, 144 km long, which passes through the South-western part of the Southern Carpathians, having on a section of 9 kilometres at Cazane, the character of cross-valley, with limestone steep slopes. Here the Iron Gates I Hydropower and Navigation System was built, which comprises the Iron Gates I reservoir and a large hydropower plant with an installed capacity of 2100 MW.

As a protected area within the county, **the Iron Gates Natural Park** is an space opened for organized, ecological tourism, offering to the visitor the combination of amusement and recreation activities, instructive – educational activities, environmental perception and protection of natural and cultural - historical resources activities. The tourist potential of the area is extremely high due to the special landscapes (the belvedere points such as Ciucarul Mare, the thalweg, the volcanic neck Trescovat), the exokarst relief on Ciucarul Mic and Ciucarul Mare, endokarst relief (Poniceva caves, Gaura cu Musca, and so on). In the park there are 18 nature reserves: Nera-Danube Pond, Baziaș, Râpa, Valea Mare, and so on.

From the entire Danube Defile, Cazanele offer the most picturesque and original landscape. There are here various forms of karst relief: the steep slopes rising wildly above the Danube waters, sinkholes, uvalas, caves (Veterani Cave, Poniceva Cave, Bats Cave, the Cave without a Name) and so on.

As a whole, the Danube Defile has a succession of forms of narrowing and enlargements ("clusters") imposed by the alternation of the crystalline and eruptive rocks with the limestone sedimentary ones. The upcoming of the Jurassic and Cretaceous limestones, together with tough formations: gneiss, granite, amphibolite, gabbro, and so on. - in the Mehedinți sector, they played a decisive role in the formation of the gorgeous Danube Defile. Cazanele Dunării represents the part of the defile between the confluence of the Danube with the Plavișevîța and Ogradena streams forming a well individualized geomorphological unit.

“Cazanele Mari si Mici” Reserve is of mixed type (IUCN Category IV) and covers 215 ha. **Cazanele Mari** are 3,8 km long and 200-350 m wide, between Plavișevița locality and Dubova bassinet, and are dominated by the heights of Ciucarul Mare (316 m), in Romania and Știrbățul Mare (768 m) in Serbia. **Cazanele Mici** are cut between the heights of Ciucarul Mic (310 m) in Romania and Știrbățul Mic (626 m) in Serbia and are situated on a length of 3.6 km between Dubova bassinet and Ogradena bassinet, with a width of 150-350 m.

Downstream of the sector of **Cazanele Mici**, the valley widens and forms the Ogradena bassinet; Further, there is a final narrowing, which forms the proper region of the "Iron Gates" located between the mouth of Bahna River and Gura Văii locality situated at the contact of Mehedinți Plateau with Severin Depression.

On the rendzinic soils of the mountainous area there are beech forests with meadows and thermophilic elements. The same soil type (Rendzina) is also found in the area of Cazanele Dunării and Almăj Mountains, but on smaller surfaces. Also, on the limestone surfaces of the Mehedinți Plateau and Mehedinți Mountains, as well as in Cazane, terra rossa soils formed on the alteration products for the compact limestones may be found in the form of patches.

Mehedinți County specific climate allows for the growth and development in good conditions, both naturally - accidentally, as well as in organized plantations of fig and almond; magnolia, **the tulip of Cazane**, shrubs and plants considered living fossils being frequently met.

The limestone area of Cazane is characterized by an exokarst and endokarst relief at different stages of evolution. In Ciucaru Mare limestone massif seven caves were identified, out of which the most important and visited one is Ponicoava Cave. All have provided important information on the habitats of Cluster in the Upper Paleolithic and Epipaleolithic.

Ponicoava Cave, also known as the Cave from the mouth of the water or Bats Cave, is the largest in the entire Danube Defile (galleries total 1660 m) and can be accessed by land or on the Danube by boat. The name of “Bats Cave” is due to the bats colonies living in the Bats Gallery, at the bottom may be observed numerous guano mounds from relatively big bats. The cavity, partly fossil, partially subfossil, is in fact a hydrological breakthrough made by Ponicoava stream in the limestone wall of the left slope of the Danube - Ciucaru Mare massif - at a relative altitude of 60 meters. It is also accessible to less experienced people, and the equipment could be a circumstantial one.

The first geological researches were made by M. Munk in 1872, and those related to fauna in 1929 by R. Jeannel. The first topographic plan of the cave was carried out between 1962 and 1963 by St. Negrea, A. Negrea and L. Botasaneanu. They also started extensive research, and in the years 1965-1969, the first two conducted an intensive study on the biocenosis of caves. In 1966-1967 I. Povara, N. Schmidt and A. Petcu drew the first profile of the cave.

It includes the active gallery (of the Ponicoava River) and the archaic one (Hall of Columns of the Great Snake). Ponicoava cave has several levels of galleries, the lower ones being active. Among the fossil galleries, the most spectacular is the Concretionary Gallery, as well as the Column Hall. Here, water and time created stalactites and stalagmites of different shapes and sizes, domes and columns, the white calcareous floor, rimstones, cavernous pearls, draperies, and so on. Ponicoava cave was declared a cave reserve due to fossil remains of *Ursus spelaeus*, a very old fragment of ceramic from Hallstattian culture and endemic species.

The cave has three access ways - the main entrance, the most accessible, is located in Ponicoava Ravines created by the stream with the same name, and it is reached from DN 57. After the escalation of the huge collapsing blocks, especially at the beginning of the gallery, almost 500 meters under the ceiling up to 26 m, with diffused light that penetrates deep inside. In the middle of the tunnel there is a slightly steep slope of about 30 meters, at the end of which is the Concretionary Gallery, which continues through a smaller gallery system. Before the first bifurcation there is the Column Hall, where water drops created stalactites and stalagmites of different shapes and sizes, domes and columns, the white calcareous floor, cavernous pearls, draperies, and so on, according to www.primariaorsova.com.

Starting from Ponicoava Ravines as well, next to the entrance through the tunnel, it is ascended the scree slope to a path leading to the entrance in the Bats Gallery. This gallery opens in an enormous room of over 100 meters long, about 60 m high and over 30 m tall. On its floor there are collapsing blocks, pits, concretions and guano mounds coming from colonies of relative big bats. From here, you can enter a system of diacaze, downhill which is full of clay belonging to the Clay Gallery. From here, the Scale Gallery opens, which leads above the Gallery of Ponicoava Temporary Watercourse. A third entrance is from the Danube, being reached by boat, passing 500 m below the wall of Ciucarul Mare up to the mouth of the cave.

The cave is a warm cavity (over 11 degrees Celsius from June to October), wet (94-100% in the depths of the galleries), and crossed by currents that are sometimes quite strong. The visit to Ponicoava Cave can be done all year round, but it is recommended between May and October. During flash flood, Ponicoava Gallery is often totally or partially flooded. It is recommended that the visits to be conducted in groups with a guide, with lamps, rubber boots, adequate equipment, as the entire period for crossing the cave takes 2-3 hours.

An important spot is within Ciucarul Mare (318 m), a trail of 2 hours from Dubova with a low difficulty level, where it may be observed the perspective of the whole Danube Defile. The access to Ciucarul Mare is made directly from DN 57, in the center of Dubova, at approx. 100 m from the Dubova City Hall on the way to Svința. The length of the trail is about 5 km that can be crossed in 2 hours. The route is well marked with yellow triangle and is accessible all year round. From the very beginning, the trail follows a slight slope through the forest. After 1 km, there is a stopover arranged by the Iron Gates Natural Park. From here, the path follows the forest until it is reached the plateau where the path crosses. It is advisable to cross the whole ridge to the eastern boundary where the houses forming Dubova township and the Dubova Bay may be admired. As within Ciucarul Mic, there are important spots, made of limestone cliffs, pavements, offering spectacular images on Cazanele Mari and the rocky massif Stirbatul Mare. The specific vegetation element encountered is the Tulip of Cazane (Tulipa Hungarica). This is particularly visible from the water, because its habitat is represented by the rocky walls of Ciucarul Mare. As fauna elements, there are species of deer, wolves, wild cats, and it is specifically found Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*), and on the cliffed coasts with sun there is *Vipera ammodytes* (a viper species found in southern Europe through to the Balkans and parts of the Middle East) (www.turism-orsova.ro).

Veterani cave is one of the most important caves of Cazanele Dunării. It has a rich historical past, being known for thousands of years. The Dacians raised it as a holy place of their supreme god, Zalmoxis. Its location is in Cazanele Mari of the Danube, more specifically, it is located in Ciucarul Mare, in Dubova township. The cave is relatively small, only 87 meters long, and the access is possible only by boat. There are boats at the Rock sculpture of Decebalus, further down the Danube, where tours to the cave may be done.

The entrance is close to the waterfront. From here, it may ascend on a wooden pontoon at the mouth of the cavity. The entrance was protected in the old days by a stone wall that may be seen today, and then there is a short corridor and a large hall. The said wall divides the mouth of the cave into two. Some claim that the wall was from the period of the Roman Empire, others argue that it was from the time of the Austrian Empire.

It is believed that during the Dacians, sacrifices were made in Veterani cave for Zalmoxis (many birds). Indeed, the cave has a window through which the light has turned out in an interesting way. It is said that this light fell perfectly on the altar created by the Dacians.

The name of the cave comes from the Italian general Veterani, who refined it in the XVIIth century. This was an excellent observation point for those who navigated on the river. Due to its strategic importance, Veterani cave has been long disputed to be conquered.

Veterani cave is not very spectacular in terms of stalactite and stalagmite formations. On the inside now there are only remains of the walls, the window and a shaft. It was built by the Turkish prisoners, now a grid is placed above to avoid accidents.

ANTHROPIC ATTRACTIONS

The Rock sculpture of Decebalus, 55 m high and 25 m wide (eye length: 4.3 meters, nose length: 7 meters, width of the nose: 4 meters), is located in the waterfall area of Cazanele Mici (Mraconia bay) on the left bank of the Danube, where the depth of the river is the highest: 120 meters.

The idea of building this bas-relief belonged to the Romanian businessman Iosif Constantin Dragan, an amateur historian, and lasted 10 years (1994-2004) for the 12 climbing sculptors to finish it, his achievement costing over one million dollars. The execution of this work took place under the leadership of the Romanian sculptor Florin Cotarcea, realizing it despite the danger represented by heights, heat and vipers. On the pontoon from the bay made by the Mraconia river, where this largest stone carving in Europe is located, can only be reached by water, by boat. For the modelling of the rock, over one ton of dynamite was used. Under the head of Decebalus there was placed a Latin inscription in the rock: "DECEBALUS REX - DRAGAN FECIT" ("Decebalus King - made by Dragan").

Tabula Traiana is situated right in front of the bas-relief, but on the Serbian bank for nearly 2000 years. This is an ancient memorial plaque, 4 meters long and 1.75 meters tall, a monument raised by the enemy of King Decebalus, the Roman Emperor Trajan, to mark the Roman imperial troops to Dacia and to commemorate the Roman Empire's victories over the Dacian kingdom in the War of 105-106, but also the completion of Trajan's Roman military road.

Mraconia Monastery is also located in Dubova township, 15 km in the western part towards Orșova city, on the left bank of the Danube, which forms in that place the most beautiful defile from all over it, between Orșova and Moldova Nouă. The monastery was erected on the site of a former observation and guidance point of the Danube vessels, because due to the relief architecture, through the narrowness of the defile there could not be simultaneous passage of two vessels. These limitations and maximum widening of the river have been called "Cazanele Dunării".

The place where this was erected was called "at the balloon", due to the observation point there. This was also known as the Monastery from the Danube Valley or from Old Ogradena, a nearby community. The word "mraconia" means "hidden place" or "dark water". The Mraconia Monastery has seen all the hostilities of history, beginning with the desolation of the invaders, the payment of the "peșcheș"(gift), the foreign domination, being also swallowed by the water. The current monastery is built on the site of the former Mraconia monastery, built in the valley with same name. The original monastery was built in 1523 under the jurisdiction of Varset Episcopate by the governor of the border region of Caransebes and Lugoj, the ban (noble title used in several states in Central and Southeastern Europe between the 7th century and the XXth century) Nicola Gârlișteanu. The church received the patron saint St. Elijah the Prophet. It is known that its ruins were covered by the Danube's waters, which were retained in the Iron Gate's reservoir. The construction of the Iron Gates I Hydroelectric Power Station in 1967 demolished the settlement, its ruins being flooded by the Danube. The monastery did not receive the right to be rebuilt in another place, and this became to be known as "The Monastery under the Water, Mraconia".

Eibenthal is the village considered to be a true "linguistic island" of the Czech minority in Romania. Eibenthal was founded in 1827 during the second wave of colonization with the Czechs, which aimed to colonize the border area of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, especially for military reasons. Iron Gates area was particularly targeted, Eibenthal being one of the few "pemi" villages (inhabitants of Bohemia) that were established in the area during this period. Most of the settlers came from Plzen, Klatovy (from these two settlements there were also many ethnic Germans among the settlers, but with time they denationalized and adopted the Czech language), Čáslav and Beroun. Their basic occupations were wood exploitation and mining. These two branches were the main sources of income for the inhabitants of Eibenthal. Lately, however, Eibenthal has experienced a strong decline due to the unfavourable economic conditions since the 1989 revolution, the migration of young people to cities and to the Czech Republic, and consequently the premature aging. If in 1934 there lived about 600 people, in 2000 there were only 302 inhabitants.

TOURISTIC INFRASTRUCTURE

ACCOMMODATION

- Casa Peștera Ponicoval, Dubova, Ponicoval Street, no. 8. 8 adults in 4 accommodation units, Tel: 0799 087 736
- Melba Pension, Dubova, Dunării Street, no. 1. 20 adults and 9 children in 10 accommodation places, restaurant, parking, terrace, Tel: 0727 474 179, 0758 076 666
- Casa Dana, Dubova, Dn57, no. 510 adults in 4 accommodation places. Billiard, garden, pavilion, barbeque, terrace, parking, inflatable pool, Tel: 0770 537 233
- Casa de vacanță Arena, Dubova, DN 57, no. 57, 8 adults in 4 accommodation places. Pavilion, barbeque, small swimming pool, beach, fishing, Tel: 0742 329 258
- Decebal Pension ****, Dubova, Dubova Street, 36 adults in 15 accommodation places. Terrace, international, Serbian, fishing restaurant, swimming pool, pontoon bridge (fishing, recreation), parking, Tel: 0747 808 585, 0252 368 032
- Casa BeaSara, Dubova, Cazanele Street, no. 11, 8 adults in 4 accommodation places. Barbeque, pavilion, playground for children, pontoon bridges for water sports and fishing, kayak, swimming pool, Tel: 0724 315 202
- Vila Victor, Dubova, Dubova Street, no. 2, 12 adults in 5 accommodation places. Barbeque, rocking chairs, swimming pool, beach chairs for the beach, motor boat trips for a fee, Tel: 0725 251 162
- Casa Panoramic, Dubova, Dunării Street, no. 37, 12 adults and 7 children in 6 accommodation places. Terrace, kitchen, TV, swimming pool, beach, parking space, bicycles, Tel: 0745 323 343
- Căsuța Alexia, Dubova, DN 6 Road, no. 43, 16 adults and 4 children in 8 accommodation places. Pavilion (fully equipped) barbeque, pontoon bridge, parking, terraces, beach chairs, rocking chairs, swimming pool, boat trips for a fee for 12 persons, Tel: 0754 725 698
- Vila Andrei, Dubova, Principală Street, no. 4, 12 adults in 5 accommodation places
Pontoon bridge, pavilion, beach chairs, sport field, 4 terraces overlooking the Danube, barbeque, fishing, parking, Tel: 0744 546 521
- Casa de Vacanța Madona, Dubova, 13 places. Swimming pool, internet, barbeque in the yard, playground, terrace, pavilion, Tel: 0740091993
- Dubova Pension, Dubova, 12 places. Internet, Barbeque in the yard, Terrace or pavilion, Phone: 0747872031, 0747094173, 0742966051
- Cabanele Valea Ponicovei, Dubova. 8 places. Internet, barbeque in the yard, Teambuilding activities, terrace or pavilion, Tel: 0743100853
- Sat vacanță Bell Ale, Mraconia Street, Eșelnița, 12 places (4 rooms). 4 wood chalets plus one of stone with solid wood furniture, terrace, indoor bathroom in each, with shower, hot water, pavilion with barbeque, refrigerator area with benches, dining room, boat included in the accommodation cost.
- Casa Verde, Orsova. Rooms, Apartment - 25 places. Internet, barbeque in the yard, playground for children, terrace or pavilion, Tel: 0744954191

FOOD

- Restaurant Melba Pension, Dubova
- International, Serbian, fishing restaurant, Decebal Pension, Dubova

RECREATION

- Cruises on the Danube in Cazane area with small or large boats. The Danube River with quiet waters or waters looking as if they are „boiling” in calcareous „boilers” with a unique, picturesque ambiance, offers beach and fishing opportunities, most of which provide facilities for this.
- Barbeque, hiking, mountain biking

SERVICES

4 food stores in Dubova

Supermarket Billa and Penny in Orsova

Accommodation and food services offered by pensions as well as parking, swimming pool, beach, tennis / football field, billiard, tennis table and recreational boats and Danube rides for 12-14 persons

Tourist information through the tourist information center in Drobeta Turnu-Severin, Orșova and through the tourist information center of the Iron Gate Natural Park at Dubova and Mraconia.

B2. Dubova- Valea Satului- Dealul Cocinilor- Poiana Ravna- Eibenthal- Dubova

The length of this trail is 45.2 km, the maximum altitude is 799 m, the maximum slope is 22.2%, with moderate / non-existent traffic, on a 43% asphalted road and with 57% of dirt road. The GPS coordinates are 44°36'41,53"N and 22°15'09,01"E.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAIL

The trail starts from the centre of Dubova township, approx. 25 km from Orsova on DN57. After 1.5 km it leaves the asphalt and starts ascending to the Valley of the Village (well-maintained forest road) until the kilometre no. 4, from where it turns left to the path that crosses Dealul Cocinilor up to Ponicoval Valley (km 14). It is abandoned the main road and it is followed the route and then the red marked tourist path to Ravna Glade, then in the south-western part to the Danube through a beech forest, the trail passes by Znamana Peak (809m) and then descends in Eibenthal. From Eibenthal, the asphalted road built on the former railroad that served the mine exploitation from Baia Noua, intersects DN57 at the mouth of Liubotina River - hence the return to Dubova is made on the shore of the river Danube (DN57).

ACCESS

- road: from E70 on national / communal roads: approx. 25 km from Orsova on DN57
- railway: thoroughfare 900 Craiova-Drobeta-Turnu Severin-Orsova-Baile Herculane-Timisoara

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

The Lower Sector of the Danube (the Romanian one), with a length of 1075 km, begins with the spectacular and impressive Iron Gates defile, 144 km long, which passes through the South-western part of the Southern Carpathians, having on a section of 9 kilometres at Cazane, the character of cross-valley, with limestone steep slopes. Here the Iron Gates I Hydropower and Navigation System was built, which comprises the Iron Gates I reservoir and a large hydropower plant with an installed capacity of 2100 MW.

As a protected area within the county, **the Iron Gates Natural Park** is an space opened for organized, ecological tourism, offering to the visitor the combination of amusement and recreation activities, instructive – educational activities, environmental perception and protection of natural and cultural - historical resources activities. The tourist potential of the area is extremely high due to the special landscapes (the belvedere points such as Ciucarul Mare, the thalweg, the volcanic neck Trescovat), the exokarst relief on Ciucarul Mic and Ciucarul Mare, endokarst relief (Ponicova caves, Gaura cu Musca, and so on). In the park there are 18 nature reserves: Nera-Danube Pond, Baziaș, Râpa, Valea Mare, and so on.

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The first geological researches were made by M. Munk in 1872, and those related to fauna in 1929 by R. Jeannel. The first topographic plan of the cave was carried out between 1962 and 1963 by St. Negrea, A. Negrea and L. Botasaneanu. They also started extensive research, and in the years 1965-1969, the first two conducted an intensive study on the biocenosis of caves. In 1966-1967 I. Povara, N. Schmidt and A. Petcu drew the first profile of the cave.

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A third entrance is from the Danube, being reached by boat, passing 500 m below the wall of Ciucarul Mare up to the mouth of the cave.

The cave is a warm cavity (over 11 degrees Celsius from June to October), wet (94-100% in the depths of the galleries), and crossed by currents that are sometimes quite strong. The visit to Ponicova Cave can be done all year round, but it is recommended between May and October. During flash flood, Ponicova Gallery is often totally or partially flooded.

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guidance point of the Danube vessels, because due to the relief architecture, through the narrowness of the defile there could not be simultaneous passage of two vessels. These limitations and maximum widening of the river have been called "Cazanele Dunării".

The place where this was erected was called "at the balloon", due to the observation point there. This was also known as the Monastery from the Danube Valley or from Old Ogradena, a nearby community. The word "mraconia" means "hidden place" or "dark water". The Mraconia Monastery has seen all the hostilities of history, beginning with the desolation of the invaders, the payment of the "peșcheș"(gift), the foreign domination, being also swallowed by the water. The current monastery is built on the site of the former Mraconia monastery, built in the valley with same name. The original monastery was built in 1523 under the jurisdiction of Varset Episcopate by the governor of the border region of Caransebes and Lugoj, the ban (noble title used in several states in Central and Southeastern Europe between the 7th century and the XXth century) Nicola Gârlișteanu. The church received the patron saint St. Elijah the Prophet. It is known that its ruins were covered by the Danube's waters, which were retained in the Iron Gate's reservoir. The construction of the Iron Gates I Hydroelectric Power Station in 1967 demolished the settlement, its ruins being flooded by the Danube. The monastery did not receive the right to be rebuilt in another place, and this became to be known as "The Monastery under the Water, Mraconia".

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TOURISTIC INFRASTRUCTURE

ACCOMODATION

- Casa Peștera Ponicoval, Dubova, Ponicoval Street, no. 8, space for 8 adults in 4 accommodation places
Tel: 0799 087 736
- Melba Pension, Dubova, Dunării Street, no. 1; 20 adults and 9 children in 10 accommodation units, restaurant, parking, terrace; Tel: 0727 474 179, 0758 076 666
- Casa Dana, Dubova, Dn57, no. 5; 10 adults in 4 accommodation places, billiard, garden, pavilion, barbeque, terrace, parking, inflatable swimming pool; Tel: 0770 537 233
- Casa de vacanță Arena, Dubova, DN 57, no. 57; 8 adults in 4 accommodation places. Pavilion, barbeque, small swimming pool, beach, fishing; Tel: 0742 329 258
- Decebal Pension****, Dubova, Dubova Street; 36 adults in 15 accommodation places. Terrace, international, Serbian, fishing restaurant, swimming pool, pontoon bridge (fishing, recreation), parking, Tel: 0747 808 585, 0252 368 032
- Casa BeaSara, Dubova, Cazanele Street, no. 11; 8 adults in 4 accommodation places. Barbeque, pavilion, children's playground, pontoon bridges for water sports and fishing, kayaking, swimming pool; Tel: 0724 315 202
- Vila Victor, Dubova, Dubova Street, no. 2; 12 adults in 5 accommodation places. Barbeque, rocking chairs, swimming pool, beach chairs for the beach, motor boat trips for a fee; Tel: 0725 251 162
- Casa Panoramic, Dubova, Dunării Street, no. 37; 12 adults and 7 children in 6 accommodation places. Terrace, kitchen, TV, swimming pool, beach, parking, bicycles; Tel: 0745 323 343

- Căsuța Alexia, Dubova, DN6 Road, no. 43; 16 adults and 4 children in 8 accommodation places. Pavilion (fully equipped), barbeque, pontoon bridge, parking, terraces, beach chairs, rocking chair, swimming pool, boat trips for a fee for 12 people; Tel: 0754 725 698
- Vila Andrei, Dubova, Principală Street, no. 4; 12 adults in 5 accommodation places. Pontoon bridge, pavilion, beach chairs, sport field, 4 terraces overlooking the Danube, barbeque, fishing, parking; Tel: 0744 546 521
- Casa de vacanță Madona, Dubova, 13 places. Swimming pool, internet, barbeque in the yard, playground for children, terrace, pavilion; Tel: 0740091993
- Dubova Pension, Dubova, 12 places. Internet, barbeque in the yard, Terrace or pavilion; Tel: 0747872031, 0747094173, 0742966051
- Cabanele Valea Ponicevei, Dubova, 8 places. Internet, barbeque in the yard, Teambuilding activities, terrace or pavilion; Tel: 0743100853
- Sat vacanță Bell Ale, Mraconia Street, Eșelnița, 12 places (4 rooms). 4 wood chalets plus one of stone with solid wood furniture, terrace, indoor bathroom in each, with shower, hot water, pavilion with barbeque, refrigerator area with benches, dining room, boat included in the accommodation cost.
- Casa Verde, Orsova. Rooms, Apartment - 25 places. Internet, barbeque in the yard, playground for children, terrace or pavilion; Tel: 0744954191

FOOD

- Restaurant Melba Pension, Dubova
- International, Serbian, fishing restaurant Decebal Pension, Dubova

RECREATION

- Cruises on the Danube in Cazane area with small or large boats. The Danube River with quiet waters or waters looking as if they are „boiling” in calcareous „boilers” with a unique, picturesque ambiance, offers beach and fishing opportunities, most of which provide facilities for this.
- Barbeque, hiking, mountain biking

SERVICES

4 food stores in Dubova. Supermaket Billa and Penny in Orsova

Accommodation and food services offered by pensions as well as parking, swimming pool, beach, tennis / football field, billiard, tennis table, and recreational boats and Danube rides for 12-14 persons

Tourist information through the tourist information center in Drobeta Turnu-Severin, Orșova and through the tourist information center of the Iron Gate Natural Park at Dubova and Mraconia.

B3. Eșelnița- Bregheda- Eșelnița

The length of this trail is 46.8 km, the maximum altitude is 979 m, the maximum slope is 14.9%, with no traffic, on a 100% of dirt road. The GPS coordinates are 44°42'51,12"N and 22°21'32,33"E.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAIL

The trail starts from the bridge over Eșelnița River, at the entrance to Eșelnița village, 5 km from Orșova on DN57. The first 13 km follow the course of the river and then it begins to ascend to Pregheda plateau (almost 1000 m altitude), where coal mining is located. The old quarries are flooded and the copper deposits in the area give the water a pronounced turquoise nuance. In the immediate vicinity of the plateau is Svinecea Mare peak (1225 m), the highest in the Almaj Mountains. The return to Eșelnița will be on the same route.

ACCESS

- road: from E70 on national / communal roads: 5 km from Orșova on DN57
- railway: thoroughfare 900 Craiova-Drobeta-Turnu Severin-Orsova-Baile Herculane-Timisoara

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

From the Almaj Mountains, the Danube collects the waters of rivers with restricted river basins as surface, developed more in the upper and middle course, rivers generally disposed north-south. The most important are Mraconia, Iuti, Svinița, Ișelnița and so on. They have lengths below 35 km and hydrographical basins below 250 km², their intake of water influencing the Danube's hydrological regime (Mraconia L - 19 km, S-115 km², Ișelnița L - 22 km, S-79 km²).

Eșelnița or Ișelnița until 1966, is a settlement on the Danube, Mehedinți County, 7 km away from Orșova, on the river flow with the same name in the Danube. The tourist accommodation offer of the locality is represented by several tourist pensions. The main attractions of Eșelnița are the ethno-tourist area and the local traditions represented by the collection of the Priest Sever Negrescu, of the Parish Museum founded in 1990 and the Ethnography collection Doina Olimpia and Teodor Grigore, which contain furniture pieces, traditional customs, icons, photography and cult objects. It is also remarkable the Monument dedicated to the Heroes of the World War Two.

Alongside Eșelnița, the locals from the Ogradena village (village moved in 1969, due to the Iron Gates Dam) built the **Watermill** dating from 1950. It is kept in operation (being a copy after one of the mills at Rudaria), being built of wood on a dry stone foundation, and covered with wood shingle. Dorsia statue is also recent, being discovered at 100 meters from the rock sculpture of Decebalus on the right side of Mraconia after a crumbling.

In the vicinity of Eșelnița there are other sites of historical and cultural importance. Also, Orșova can be a stopping place for relaxation and sightseeing.

NATURAL ATTRACTION

The Lower Sector of the Danube (the Romanian one), with a length of 1075 km, begins with the spectacular and impressive Iron Gates defile, 144 km long, which passes through the South-western part of the Southern Carpathians, having on a section of 9 kilometres at Cazane, the character of cross-valley, with limestone steep slopes. Here the Iron Gates I Hydropower and Navigation System was built, which comprises the Iron Gates I reservoir and a large hydropower plant with an installed capacity of 2100 MW.

As a protected area within the county, **the Iron Gates Natural Park** is an space opened for organized, ecological tourism, offering to the visitor the combination of amusement and recreation activities, instructive – educational activities, environmental perception and protection of natural and cultural - historical resources activities. The tourist potential of the area is extremely high due to the special landscapes (the belvedere points such as Ciucarul Mare, the thalweg, the volcanic neck Trescovat), the exokarst relief on Ciucarul Mic and Ciucarul Mare, endokarst relief (Ponicova caves, Gaura cu Musca, and so on). In the park there are 18 nature reserves: Nera-Danube Pond, Baziaș, Râpa, Valea Mare, and so on.

From the entire Danube Defile, Cazanele offer the most picturesque and original landscape. There are here various forms of karst relief: the steep slopes rising wildly above the Danube waters, sinkholes, uvalas, caves (Veterani Cave, Ponicova Cave, Bats Cave, the Cave without a Name) and so on.

As a whole, the Danube Defile has a succession of forms of narrowing and enlargements ("clusters") imposed by the alternation of the crystalline and eruptive rocks with the limestone sedimentary ones. The up-coming of the Jurassic and Cretaceous limestones, together with tough formations: gneiss, granite, amphibolite, gabbro, and so on. - in the Mehedinți sector, they played a decisive role in the formation of the gorgeous Danube Defile.

Cazanele Dunării represents the part of the defile between the confluence of the Danube with the Plavișevîța and Ogradena streams forming a well individualized geomorphological unit.

"Cazanele Mari si Mici" Reserve is of mixed type (IUCN Category IV) and covers 215 ha. **Cazanele Mari** are 3,8 km long and 200-350 m wide, between Plavișevîța locality and Dubova bassinet, and are dominated by the heights of Ciucarul Mare (316 m), in Romania and Știrbățul Mare (768 m) in Serbia. **Cazanele Mici** are cut

between the heights of Ciucarul Mic (310 m) in Romania and Štirbățul Mic (626 m) in Serbia and are situated on a length of 3.6 km between Dubova bassinet and Ogradena bassinet, with a width of 150-350 m.

Downstream of the sector of **Cazanele Mici**, the valley widens and forms the Ogradena bassinet; Further, there is a final narrowing, which forms the proper region of the "Iron Gates" located between the mouth of Bahna River and Gura Văii locality situated at the contact of Mehedinți Plateau with Severin Depression.

On the rendzinic soils of the mountainous area there are beech forests with meadows and thermophilic elements. The same soil type (Rendzina) is also found in the area of Cazanele Dunării and Almăj Mountains, but on smaller surfaces. Also, on the limestone surfaces of the Mehedinți Plateau and Mehedinți Mountains, as well as in Cazane, terra rossa soils formed on the alteration products for the compact limestones may be found in the form of patches.

Mehedinti County specific climate allows for the growth and development in good conditions, both naturally - accidentally, as well as in organized plantations of fig and almond; magnolia, **the tulip of Cazane**, shrubs and plants considered living fossils being frequently met.

The limestone area of Cazane is characterized by an exokarst and endokarst relief at different stages of evolution. In Ciucaru Mare limestone massif seven caves were identified, out of which the most important and visited one is Ponicoval Cave. All have provided important information on the habitats of Cluster in the Upper Paleolithic and Epipaleolithic.

Ponicoval Cave, also known as the Cave from the mouth of the water or Bats Cave, is the largest in the entire Danube Defile (galleries total 1660 m) and can be accessed by land or on the Danube by boat. The name of "Bats Cave" is due to the bats colonies living in the Bats Gallery, at the bottom may be observed numerous guano mounds from relatively big bats. The cavity, partly fossil, partially subfossil, is in fact a hydrological breakthrough made by Ponicoval stream in the limestone wall of the left slope of the Danube - Ciucaru Mare massif - at a relative altitude of 60 meters. It is also accessible to less experienced people, and the equipment could be a circumstantial one.

The first geological researches were made by M. Munk in 1872, and those related to fauna in 1929 by R. Jeannel. The first topographic plan of the cave was carried out between 1962 and 1963 by St. Negrea, A. Negrea and L. Botasaneanu. They also started extensive research, and in the years 1965-1969, the first two conducted an intensive study on the biocenosis of caves. In 1966-1967 I. Povara, N. Schmidt and A. Petcu drew the first profile of the cave.

It includes the active gallery (of the Ponicoval River) and the archaic one (Hall of Columns of the Great Snake). Ponicoval cave has several levels of galleries, the lower ones being active. Among the fossil galleries, the most spectacular is the Concretionary Gallery, as well as the Column Hall. Here, water and time created stalactites and stalagmites of different shapes and sizes, domes and columns, the white calcareous floor, rimstones, cavernous pearls, draperies, and so on.

Ponicoval cave was declared a cave reserve due to fossil remains of *Ursus spelaeus*, a very old fragment of ceramic from Hallstattian culture and endemic species. The cave has three access ways - the main entrance, the most accessible, is located in Ponicoval Ravines created by the stream with the same name, and it is reached from DN 57. After the escalation of the huge collapsing blocks, especially at the beginning of the gallery, almost 500 meters under the ceiling up to 26 m, with diffused light that penetrates deep inside. In the middle of the tunnel there is a slightly steep slope of about 30 meters, at the end of which is the Concretionary Gallery, which continues through a smaller gallery system. Before the first bifurcation there is the Column Hall, where water drops created stalactites and stalagmites of different shapes and sizes, domes and columns, the white calcareous floor, cavernous pearls, draperies, and so on, according to www.primariaorsova.com.

Starting from Ponicoval Ravines as well, next to the entrance through the tunnel, it is ascended the scree slope to a path leading to the entrance in the Bats Gallery. This gallery opens in an enormous room of over 100 meters long, about 60 m high and over 30 m tall. On its floor there are collapsing blocks, pits, concretions and guano mounds coming from colonies of relative big bats. From here, you can enter a system of diaclaze, downhill

which is full of clay belonging to the Clay Gallery. From here, the Scale Gallery opens, which leads above the Gallery of Ponicoval Temporary Watercourse.

A third entrance is from the Danube, being reached by boat, passing 500 m below the wall of Ciucarul Mare up to the mouth of the cave.

The cave is a warm cavity (over 11 degrees Celsius from June to October), wet (94-100% in the depths of the galleries), and crossed by currents that are sometimes quite strong. The visit to Ponicoval Cave can be done all year round, but it is recommended between May and October. During flash flood, Ponicoval Gallery is often totally or partially flooded.

It is recommended that the visits to be conducted in groups with a guide, with lamps, rubber boots, adequate equipment, as the entire period for crossing the cave takes 2-3 hours.

An important spot is within Ciucarul Mare (318 m), a trail of 2 hours from Dubova with a low difficulty level, where it may be observed the perspective of the whole Danube Defile. The access to Ciucarul Mare is made directly from DN 57, in the center of Dubova, at approx. 100 m from the Dubova City Hall on the way to Svinița. The length of the trail is about 5 km that can be crossed in 2 hours. The route is well marked with yellow triangle and is accessible all year round. From the very beginning, the trail follows a slight slope through the forest. After 1 km, there is a stopover arranged by the Iron Gates Natural Park. From here, the path follows the forest until it is reached the plateau where the path crosses. It is advisable to cross the whole ridge to the eastern boundary where the houses forming Dubova township and the Dubova Bay may be admired. As within Ciucarul Mic, there are important spots, made of limestone cliffs, pavements, offering spectacular images on Cazanele Mari and the rocky massif Stirbatul Mare. The specific vegetation element encountered is the Tulip of Cazane (Tulipa Hungarica). This is particularly visible from the water, because its habitat is represented by the rocky walls of Ciucarul Mare. As fauna elements, there are species of deer, wolves, wild cats, and it is specifically found Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*), and on the cliffed coasts with sun there is *Vipera ammodytes* (a viper species found in southern Europe through to the Balkans and parts of the Middle East) (www.turism-orsova.ro).

Veterani cave is one of the most important caves of Cazanele Dunării. It has a rich historical past, being known for thousands of years. The Dacians raised it as a holy place of their supreme god, Zalmoxis. Its location is in Cazanele Mari of the Danube, more specifically, it is located in Ciucarul Mare, in Dubova township. The cave is relatively small, only 87 meters long, and the access is possible only by boat. There are boats at the Rock sculpture of Decebalus, further down the Danube, where tours to the cave may be done.

The entrance is close to the waterfront. From here, it may ascend on a wooden pontoon at the mouth of the cavity. The entrance was protected in the old days by a stone wall that may be seen today, and then there is a short corridor and a large hall. The said wall divides the mouth of the cave into two. Some claim that the wall was from the period of the Roman Empire, others argue that it was from the time of the Austrian Empire. It is believed that during the Dacians, sacrifices were made in Veterani cave for Zalmoxis (many birds). Indeed, the cave has a window through which the light has turned out in an interesting way. It is said that this light fell perfectly on the altar created by the Dacians.

The name of the cave comes from the Italian general Veterani, who refined it in the XVIIth century. This was an excellent observation point for those who navigated on the river. Due to its strategic importance, Veterani cave has been long disputed to be conquered.

Veterani cave is not very spectacular in terms of stalactite and stalagmite formations. On the inside now there are only remains of the walls, the window and a shaft. It was built by the Turkish prisoners, now a grid is placed above to avoid accidents.

ANTHROPIC ATTRACTIONS

The Rock sculpture of Decebalus, 55 m high and 25 m wide (eye length: 4.3 meters, nose length: 7 meters, width of the nose: 4 meters), is located in the waterfall area of Cazanele Mici (Mraconia bay) on the left bank of the Danube, where the depth of the river is the highest: 120 meters.

The idea of building this bas-relief belonged to the Romanian businessman Iosif Constantin Dragan, an amateur historian, and lasted 10 years (1994-2004) for the 12 climbing sculptors to finish it, his achievement costing over one million dollars.

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to the Czech Republic, and consequently the premature aging. If in 1934 there lived about 600 people, in 2000 there were only 302 inhabitants.

Tricule Fortress is located on the left bank of the Danube, in Mehedinți County, 4 km downstream of Șvinița locality. There are here three towers arranged in the corners of a hypothetical triangle, which before the elevation of the Danube (due to the construction of the dam -1971) were on the water bank. Today, two of them are surrounded by the waters of the Danube, and the southern tower is entirely under water. The towers seen today are 10 and 11 meters high. One has suffered because of the treasure seekers, which have caused the collapse of the river segment. The three towers were built of stone, the walls having a thickness of 1.40 meters at the base and almost 0.8 meters at the top. The towers had three levels inside, used for various purposes: food storage, supervision, and area defence.

The first documentary attestation of Șvinița Citadel is made in the document issued in 1419 by Sigismund of Luxembourg, where it was stated that the fortress from Șvinița was entrusted by the Hungarian king to the Knights of the Teutonic Order, in order to ensure the defence of the Danube border. In another document from 1443, the fortress appears among the fortresses defended by the citizens of Banat. Historians, leaving a fairly large margin of error, speak for the period between the second half of the XIIIth century and the beginning of the XVth century, but before 1430.

Ruins of Coronini Fortress / Saint Ladislau Fortress. They are near Coronini village, on the road that leads from Orsova to Moldova Noua, and has a special story. Built on the site of some ancient Dacian ruins, the fortress was first mentioned in a document in 1430, from which it can be concluded that it was finished by Sigismund of Luxembourg in 1428 (though it was proved to be older, with at least one other century). But after 1536 there are no longer any mentions of the fortress. One reason for this is that after the year 1526, the region came under Ottoman domination and the fortress lost its strategic importance. On the other side of the Danube, on the Serbian bank, is the Golubăț fortress, built around the same period. There is a legend telling the story of a Captain from Coronini who has fallen in love with a slave from Golubăț.

Saint Ana Monastery is located on Dealul Moșului, a place that offers a unique landscape dominating Orșova city and its surroundings. This monastery has a special history, being founded by the famous interwar journalist Pamfil Șeicaru, who fought in the area of Orsova as a young second lieutenant of the XVIIth Infantry Regiment in the First World War. What made him erect a monastery is a story that happened in the years of the war, an accident that marked him deeply. In the autumn of 1916, right on Dealul Moșului, the journalist was ground covered, along with his comrade in arms, Petre Găvănescu, by the explosion of a shell at a very short distance from them. They both escaped alive, and Șeicaru promised to erect this place, when he had material possibilities, a monastery, in gratitude to God, but also in the memory of all the heroes who fell for Greater Romania, as noted himself in the act of donation of the monastery to the Metropolitan Church of Oltenia, a document authenticated at Munich on March 24th, 1975.

Situated in the centre of the city, **Pescăruș island** is a water park surrounded by Park General Ioan Dragalina.

The Roman Catholic Cathedral in Orsova is considered an architectural masterpiece of the XXth century, representing at the same time a unique page in the history of the city, the church being the connecting bridge between the minorities of Orsova (Germans, Czechs, Hungarians, and so on.). The cathedral is located in the central area of the municipality, in the immediate vicinity of the "Market 1800", with a dominant position. The church is unique in Europe, its specific elements being the tent-like shapes of the interior and the cross-shaped roof. The construction of the church took place between 1972 and 1974 under the supervision of the architect Hans Hackelmann, during the priest Johann Marcovity. It has an electronic pipe organ, but also an old mechanical pipe organ, operating for the religious services, but also for concerts. The religious service is held in four languages: German, Czech, Hungarian and Romanian.

The pictorial frieze representing the "Road of Golgota" was painted by Gabriel Popa in a modern manner. In the Catholic Cathedral in Orsova, in religious images there are painted: the Bolshevik revolutionary V.I.Lenin, the gymnast Nadia Comaneci, the former member of Beatles, John Lennon and the Romanian actors Florin Piersic and Ana Szeles.

TOURISTIC INFRASTRUCTURE

ACCOMODATION

The area from Orșova to Dubova has many accommodation units, most of them classified as pensions, which also offer secondary recreational services such as boat trips, fishing on pontoon bridges or boat rides and swimming pools. The list shows some of them, which add up to 70 properties.

Eșelnița

- Steaua Dunarii Pension, Dunarii Street, no. 1016, 48 places, 24 rooms. Restaurant, parking, conference room, terrace, pontoon bridge, Tel: 0722 207 918
- Doina Pension, Dn 57, km 2, 12 places. Swimming pool, restaurant, internet, barbeque in the yard, playground for children, terrace or pavilion, Tel: 0751057725
- La Ponton Pension 34 places. Restaurant, barbeque in the yard, local products sales, teambuilding activities, playground for children, terrace or pavilion, Tel: 0724.165.732, 0722.598.497
- Septembrie Pension, DN 57, 36 places. Swimming pool, internet, barbeque in the yard, playground for children, terrace or pavilion, Tel: 0726135065
- Ancora Pension, 35 places. Swimming pool, restaurant, internet, terrace or pavilion, Tel: 0731031248, 0372745115
- Casa de vacanță Flaviana, 10 places. Swimming pool, internet, barbeque in the yard, playground for children, terrace or pavilion, Tel: 0724405968
- Maria Pension, 8 places. Barbeque in the yard, Playground for children, Terrace or pavilion, Tel: 0721.514.009, 0749.017.236, 0741.115.286
- Sat vacanță Bell Ale, Mraconia Street, 12 places (4 rooms), 4 wooden stables plus one of stone with solid wood furniture, terrace, pavilion with barbeque, boat included in the cost of accommodation. Tel: 0744 316 060, 0743 109 883

Dubova

- Casa Peștera Poncova, Poncova Street, no. 8. 8 adults in 4 accommodation places, Tel: 0799 087 736
- Melba Pension, Dunării Street, no. 1, 20 adults and 9 children in 10 accommodation places, restaurant, parking, terrace, Tel: 0727 474 179, 0758 076 666
- Casa Dana, Dn57, no. 5. 10 adults in 4 accommodation places, billiard, garden, pavilion, barbeque, terrace, parking, inflatable pool, Tel: 0770 537 233
- Casa de vacanță Arena, Dubova, DN 57, no. 57. 8 adults in 4 accommodation places. Pavilion, barbeque, small swimming pool, beach, fishing, Tel: 0742 329 258
- Decebal Pension****, Dubova Street. 36 adults in 15 accommodation places. Terrace, international, Serbian, fishing restaurant swimming pool, pontoon bridge (fishing, recreation), parking, Tel: 0747 808 585, 0252 368 032
- Casa BeaSara, Cazanele Street, no. 11. 8 adults in 4 accommodation places. Barbeque, pavilion, children's playground, pontoon bridges for water sports and fishing, kayaking, swimming pool. Tel: 0724 315 202
- Vila Victor, Dubova Street, no. 2. 12 adults in 5 accommodation places. Barbeque, rocking chairs, swimming pool, beach chairs, motor boat for a fee, Tel: 0725 251 162
- Casa Panoramic, Dunării Street, no. 37, 12 adults and 7 children in 6 accommodation places. Terrace, kitchen, TV, swimming pool, beach, parking, bicycles, Tel: 0745 323 343

- Căsuța Alexia, DN 6 Road, no. 43, 16 adults and 4 children in 8 accommodation places. Pavilion (fully equipped), barbeque, pontoon bridge, parking, terraces, beach chairs, rocking chair, swimming pool, boat trip for a fee for 12 persons, Tel: 0754 725 698
- Vila Andrei, Principala Street, no. 4, 12 adults in 5 accommodation places. Pontoon bridge, pavilion, beach chairs, sport field, 4 terraces overlooking the Danube, barbeque, fishing place, parking, Tel: 0744 546 521
- Casa de vacanță Madona, 13 places. Swimming pool, internet, Barbeque in the yard, playground, terrace, pavilion, Tel: 0740091993
- Dubova Pension, 12 places. Internet, Barbeque in the yard, Terrace or pavilion, Phone: 0747872031, 0747094173, 0742966051
- Cabanele Valea Ponicevei, 8 places. Internet, Barbeque in the yard, Teambuilding activities, terrace or pavilion, Tel: 0743100853

Orșova

- Casa Verde, Rooms, Apartment - 25 places. Internet, barbeque in the yard, playground for children, terrace or pavilion, Tel: 0744954191
- Meridian Hotel ***, Eroilor Street, no. 21. 20 double rooms + 2 apartments. Restaurants, conference room, bar, billiard, parking, Tel: 0252362800
- Apolodor Hotel ***, Strada 1 Decembrie 1918 Street, No 1. 10 rooms. Restaurant, beach, pontoon bridge, parking, bar, Tel: 0352 415 925
- Dunavis Pension, Al. Vlahuță Street, no. 10, Orșova, 17 places, 6 rooms. Parking, terrace, swimming pool, barbeque, bicycle rental, Tel: 0764 351 314

FOOD

- • Restaurant Steaua Danube Pension, Doina, La Ponton, September, Ancora, Eșelnița
- • Restaurant Melba Pension, Dubova
- • International, Serbian, fishing restaurant Decebal Pension, Dubova
- • Restaurant Meridian Hotel, Apolodor, Orșova

RECREATION

- Fishing, hunting, cycling and mountain biking, trekking, mountaineering
- Cruises on the Danube in Cazane area with small or large boats. The Danube River with quiet waters or waters looking as if they are „boiling” in calcareous „boilers” with a unique, picturesque ambiance, offers beach and fishing opportunities, most of which provide facilities for this.
- Barbeque, hiking, mountain biking

SERVICES

4 food stores in Dubova. Supermaket Billa and Penny in Orșova

Accommodation and food services offered by pensions as well as parking, swimming pool, beach, tennis / football field, billiard, tennis table, and recreational boats and Danube rides for 12-14 persons

Tourist information through the tourist information center in Drobeta Turnu-Severin, Orșova and through the tourist information center of the Iron Gate Natural Park at Dubova and Mraconia.

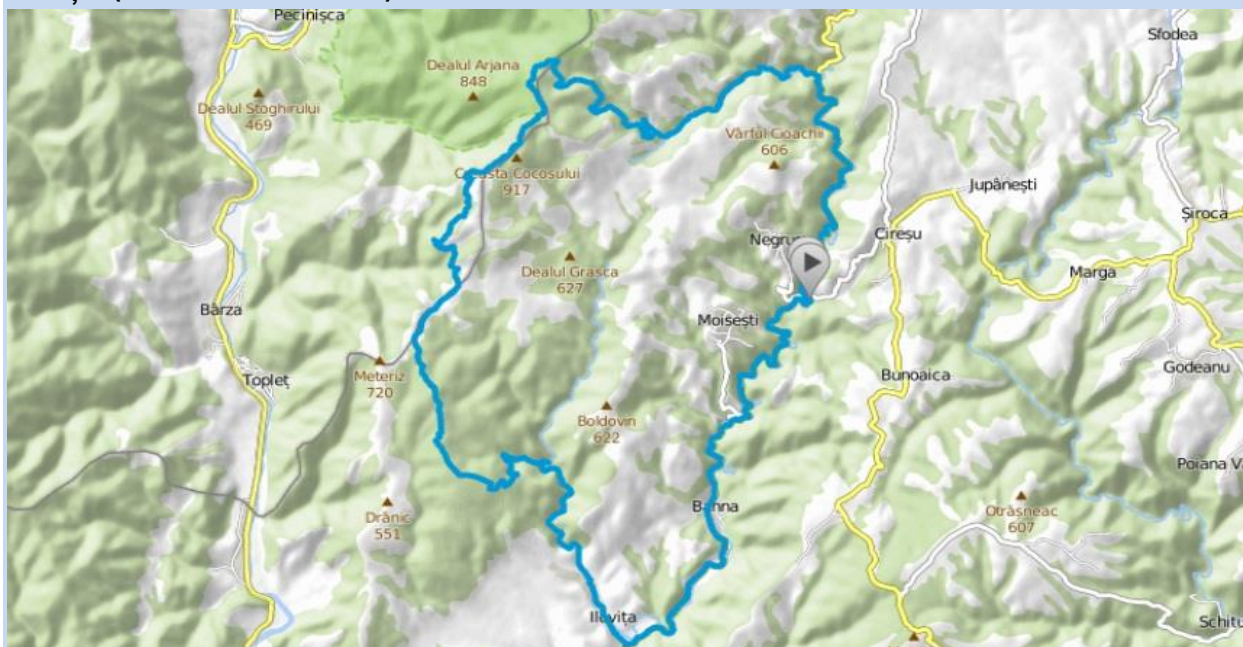
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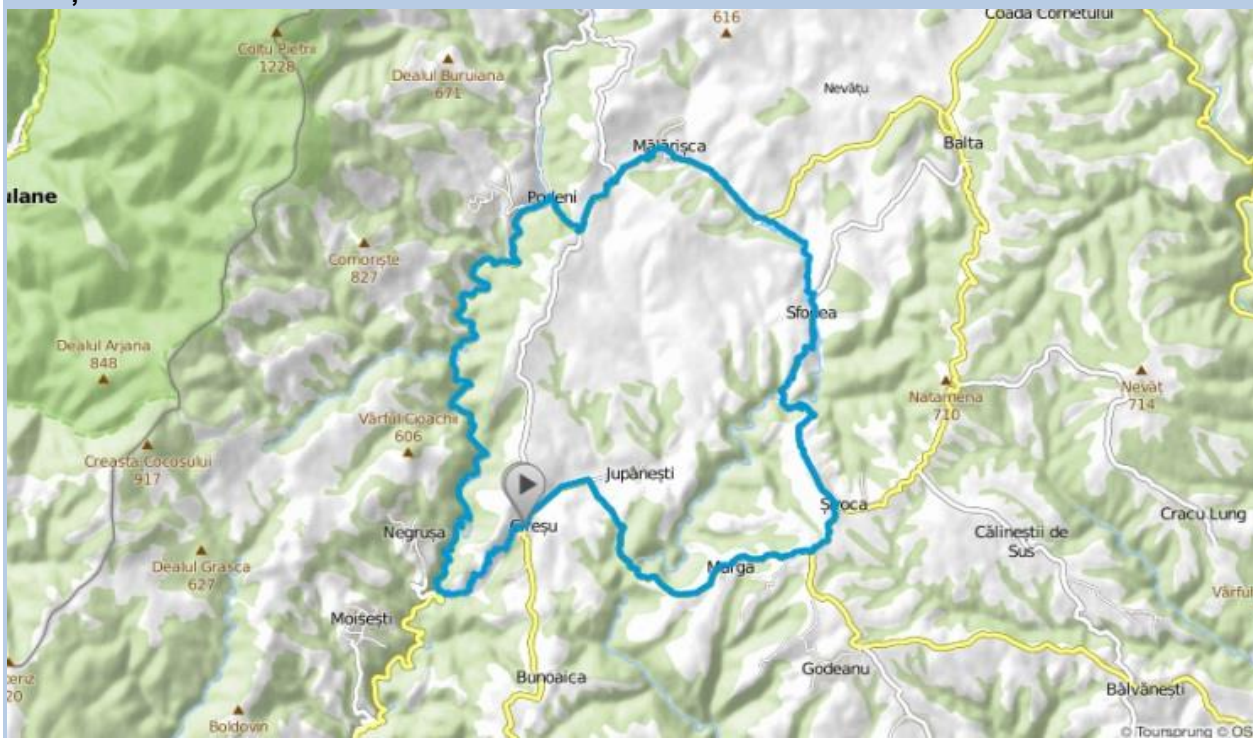
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<http://pe-harta.ro/mehedinti>

ANNEXES

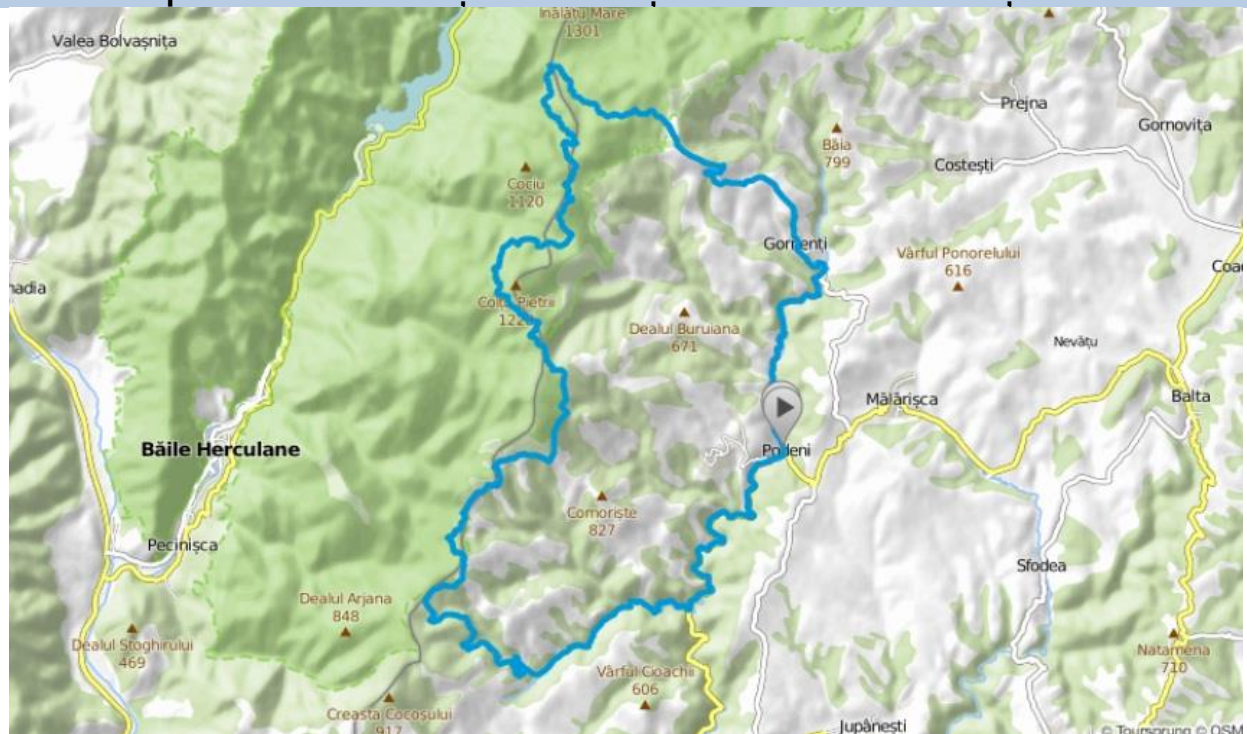
A1. Cireșu (canton Salvamont) - Bahna- Ilovița- Meteriz- Creasta Cocoșului- Topolova- Cireșu (canton Salvamont)



A3. Cireșu- Marga- Șiroca- Sfodea- Malarișca- Podeni- Bahna Valley- Canton Salvamont- Cireșu



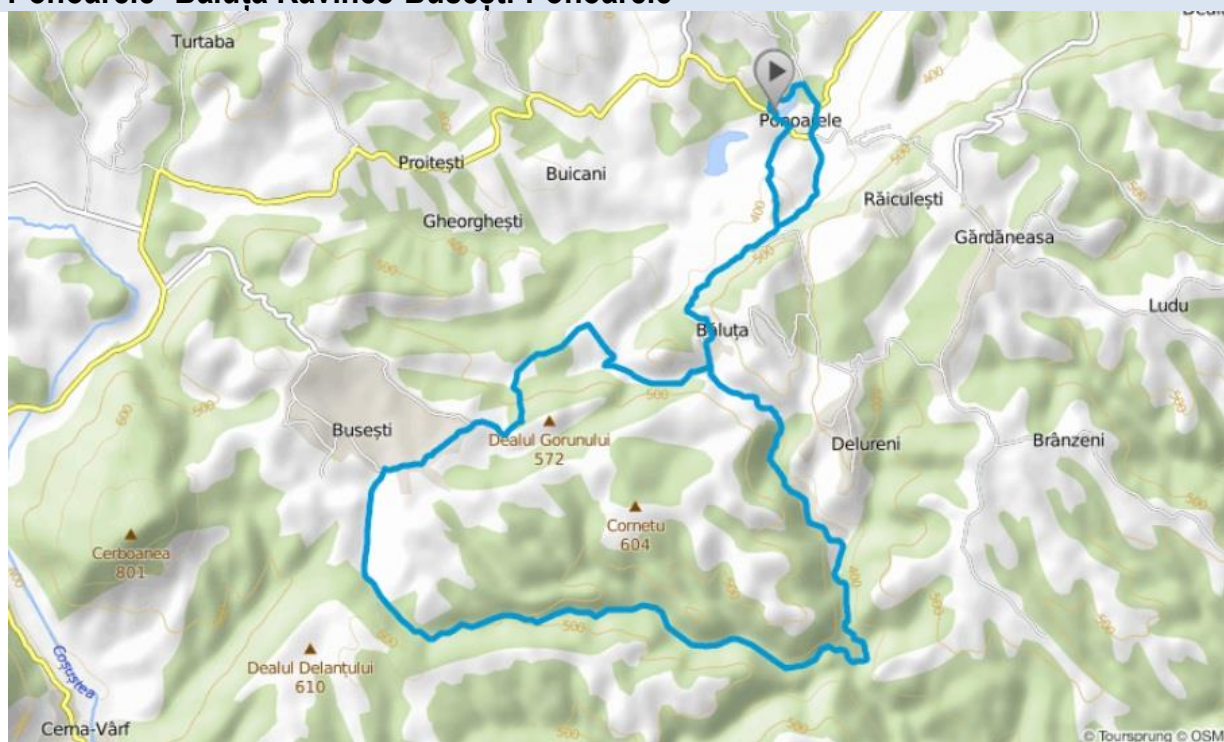
A4. Podeni-Topolova-Culmea Munților Mehedinți-Balta Cerbului-Gornenți-Podeni



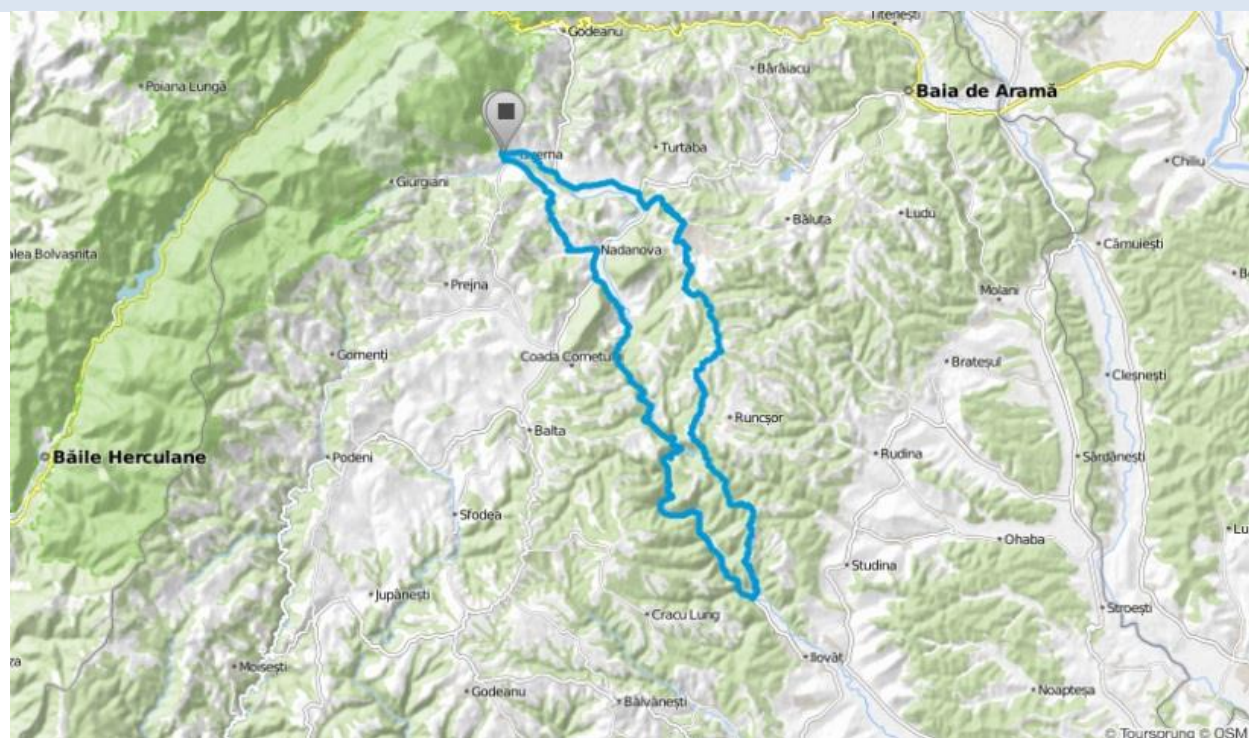
A6. Ponoarele- Băluța Ravines-Bala de Sus-Brativoiești-Baia de Arama-Gărdăneasa-Ponoarele



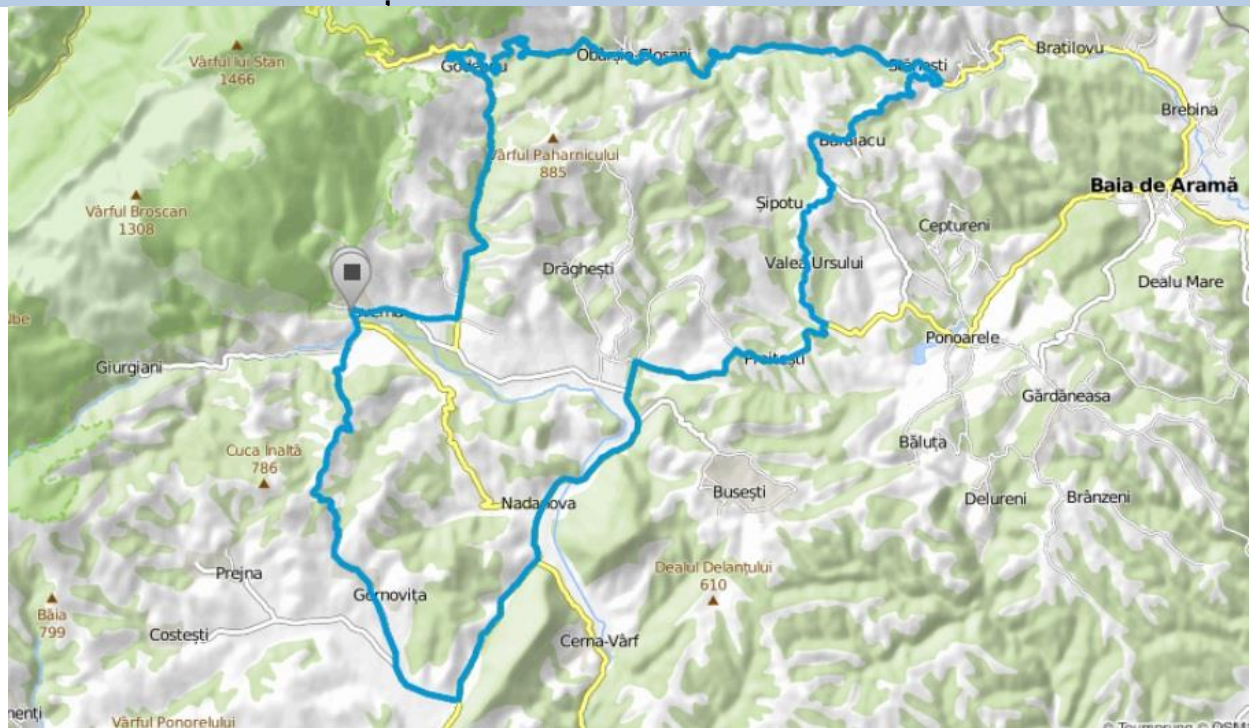
A7. Ponoarele- Băluța Ravines-Busești-Ponoarele



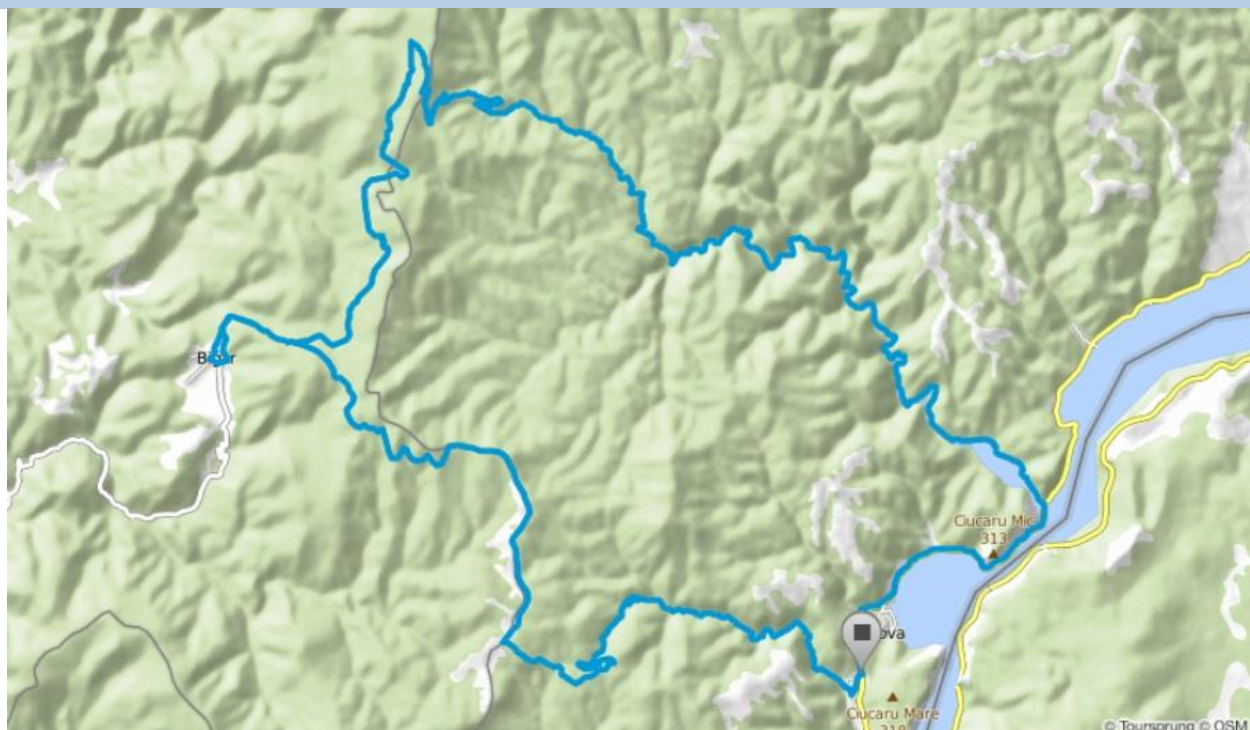
A8. Isverna- Nadanova- Cerna Vârf- Firizu- Dâlbocița- Busești- Isverna



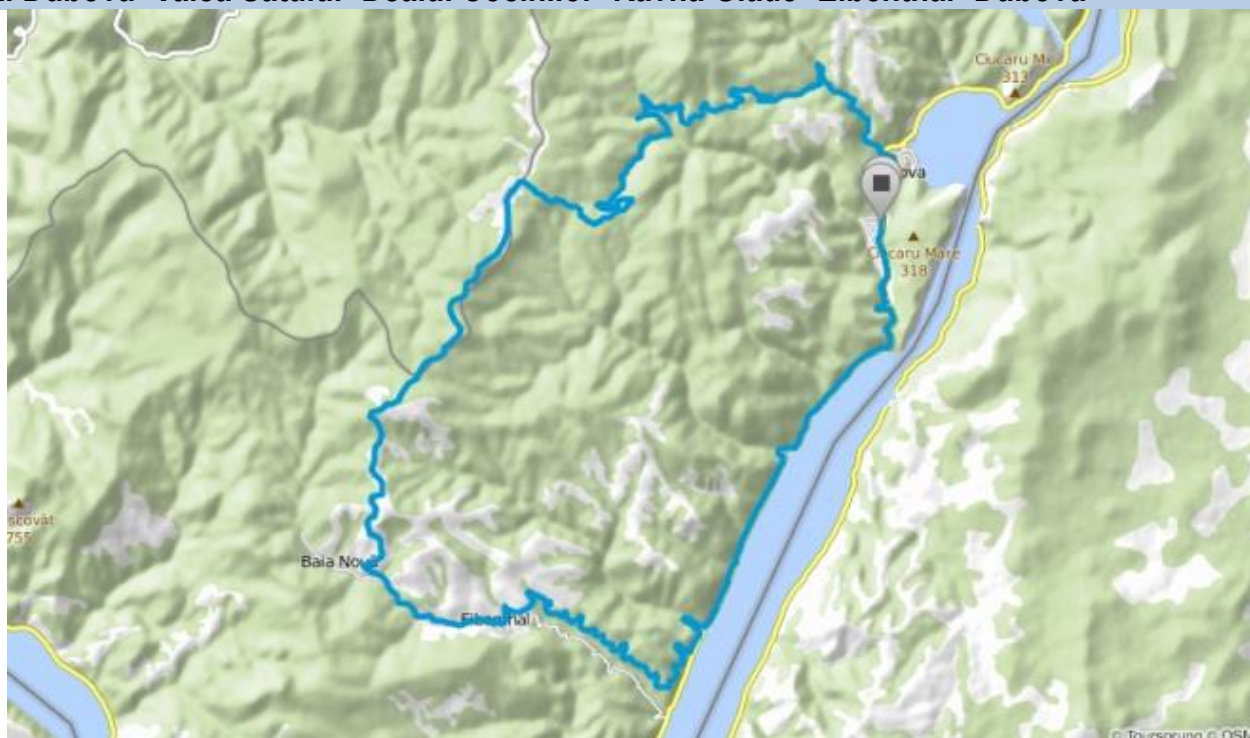
A9. Isverna- Seliște- Valea Verde- Godeanu- Obârșia Cloșani- Stănești- Bârâiacu-Valea Ursului- Nadanova- Gornovița- Isverna



B1. Dubova- Mraconia- Bigăr- Ravna Glade – Ponicoval Valley- Dubova



B2. Dubova- Valea Satului- Dealul Cocinilor- Ravna Glade- Eibenthal- Dubova



B3. Eșelnița- Bregheda- Eșelnița

