



MAPPING THE UNEXPLORED RESOURCES AND INTANGIBLE HERITAGE IN THE BULGARIAN-SERBIAN CROSS-BORDER REGION

*QuesTour –
Valorisation and capitalization of
unexplored tourism cultural and historical routes in the cross-
border region Bulgaria-Serbia*

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Any translation into other language shall be deemed as reference and English version shall prevail in any case!

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. DEFINITIONS

Mapping the unexplored resources and intangible heritage is a spatial inventory of cultural and natural assets for sustainable tourism and tourism products. The study mainly covers points of interest that have value in terms of natural and (tangible and intangible) cultural heritage and the potential to transform them into tourist attractions. The mapping process is complex and multi-layered and contains procedures of research, identification, conceptualisation, classification, and presentation in spatial order. The mapping is an instrument that helps various stakeholders to identify resources, to develop grounded networks and to plan protection and safeguarding. Mapping puts an element in the framework of spatial density and infrastructure, basically transport and hospitality assets. Integration of diverse mapping approaches assures its reliability and capacity to stay up to date.

All the natural wealth, landmarks and areas, tangible cultural monuments, cultural landscapes, traditional industrial features, elements of intangible cultural heritage, especially those under legal protection, that are not on the regional, national or international tourism market are considered **unexplored resources**. This definition comprises mainly sites and events of local significance and adds value that has not been capitalised at all or is not capitalised enough. Mapping is the first analytical stage in transforming these units from heritage through social capital into a market product from the perspective of sustainable alternative tourism. Since tourism is an activity connected with relocation, geography-based analytical resources turn determinative.

1.2. WHY MAP RESOURCES?

Mapping heritage resources for niche tourism is a tool combining cultural mapping and assets mapping. Being in-between, mapping heritage resources provide inventory for stakeholders on the tourism market and facilitates community control on heritage use. Hence, mapping is an activity of great responsibility because it identifies, valorises, and prioritises heritage values – and these are the mapping grounds. The next issue is: who has the right to map heritage resources? The answer is everybody and nobody – the stakeholders only as a network but no one individually. From this perspective, heritage resources mapping is considered necessary because it provides a medium through which different stakeholders and disciplines can bring their respective expertise and knowledge about heritage (Avrami 2019). It is a tool for promoting cultural understanding and cohesion (Freitas 2016).

1.3. HERITAGE AND TOURISM

Cultural and natural heritage are concepts that instrumentalize the past, the traditions and nature from the perspective of contemporary values and notions. These values might be universal like humanism, aesthetics, uniqueness, etc., as well as local ones connected mainly with political history (liberation, economic development, science,



Figure 1. Heritage on the tourism market

etc.). For mainstream and niche tourism, universal values are essential and useful for transforming heritage into a product. Especially concerning CBR, local heritage might be perceived offensive or humiliating for the tourist from the other side of the border (e.g. monuments of Serbian-Bulgarian War of 1885 or religious heritage in the region of Bosilegrad).

However, heritage is not a solid structure that stays unchanged forever. Cultural heritage depends on economic and social settings of the community that bear this heritage. Climate changes and industrial pollution strongly influence natural heritage. Therefore, using heritage as a product means not only promoting and offering it but also safeguarding and protecting that means care for the region and population. It should also be admitted that the heritage element pricing as a product is not expected to correspond with this element value.

Any economic system requires four components: products, producers, consumers, and markets. (Ashworth 2009: 105) Regarding cultural heritage, **product and producer usually are an inseparable unit**, i.e. product cannot be transferred to another producer. Often, the market is spatially connected with the producer too what is, in fact, the core of cultural tourism. Regarding natural heritage, the role of the producer is played by its managers and protectors. Thence, on the market of heritage tourism, both products and producers are not usual. "Producers of heritage products are as diverse as the products themselves." (ibid.) Several steps have to be taken to transform heritage and its bearers and protectors to a tourism product and producers on the tourist market. What is more important, **customers** usually become not just **visitors** but **heirs** of cultural heritage because they receive and experience its value as a piece of a community past.



Figure 2. Heritage transformation into a tourism product

Lateral thinking is important in collecting heritage sites and practices to be transformed into a tourism product. Two parallel worlds have to be matched without loss: the calm and preferably slowly changing world of heritage, which is local and the global dynamic and busy world of the tourism market. The logical answer is the niche tourism (alternative, quest, etc.) but the real challenge is the mainstream tourist to be attracted and the heritage to be kept at the same time.

Still, the heritage product must be authentic or, if this term being quite problematic has to be refused, the **balance between real life and the market product** should be kept. "The risk of a tacky product is high." (Ashley et al. 2005: 4) A key measure is to convince heritage bearers and protectors that tourism is the way they can promote this heritage as a value but not just a product. That means quite a careful attitude to the community and its possessions and practices from the tourist product sellers and customers, so not every heritage site and practice might be used on the tourism market. For instance, kin gatherings ('kurban'/ 'sabor' in Bulgaria and 'slava' in Serbia) are popular among CBR population and very interesting to be observed and to take part in, but usually, external visitors are not welcome. Here the issue of heritage **commodification** raised as well, and it has to be considered together with the positive **impact of tourism toward encouraging the heritage maintenance**.

In the few paragraphs above, several concepts were mentioned and the seller of a tourism product and the stakeholder in the tourism market has to bear in mind all these issues. Within the current study, analysts took them into account and based the surveys on the considerations arising from them.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE STATE OF RESEARCH

Research approaches to unexplored cultural, natural, and historical resources step on several theoretical discussions in cultural and social anthropology and sociology, i.e. transmission of cultural heritage, heritage in risk, agricultural heritage and cultural landscapes, etc. In general, the term 'heritage' has been imposed by UNESCO and its policies regarding natural and cultural wealth and diversity worldwide. Thinking of natural and cultural sites as heritage started about 1972 when UNESCO adopted in Paris the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage¹. At this time, the idea of cultural heritage contained monuments (works of architecture, sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, etc.), groups of buildings, sites (works of man or the combined works of nature and man, etc.) which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science and from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological points of view (Article 1). Natural features, geological and physiographical formations, and natural sites of outstanding universal value from the perspective of science, conservation, or natural beauty were considered natural heritage (article 2).

In 2001, about 30 years later, UNESCO adopted the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage². According to this document, "underwater cultural heritage means all traces of human existence having a cultural, historical or archaeological character which have been partially or totally under water, periodically or continuously, for at least 100 years" (Article 1).

Only two years later, in 2003, UNESCO adopted the last heritage document – Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage³. After 2003, understanding of heritage is developed much. According to the Convention 2003, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. The intangible cultural heritage contains oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, traditional craftsmanship (Article 2). That document reflected turn in the concept of heritage that had changed much and transfer right to identify heritage from professionals to the communities.

Today scholars insist that the heritage is a construct but not a natural phenomenon. It is considered always in progress, in the process of reconsideration, contestation, transmission, etc. Available terminology and the practices launched because of the Convention indicate the interest to the issue on the level of policies which receive also their interpretative reflections (Kurin 2004; see also Lawson 2016). There are few scientific works, basically articles and short contributions, that study 'heritage with no heirs' (Kocój 2015; Sandri 2013) and 'folklore without a folk' (see Early and Seitel 2002; Chan 2016) from the anthropological point of view.

The importance of cultural heritage for sustainable local development and sustainable tourism forms (cultural, eco, alternative, rural, etc.) has been studied in-debt worldwide (see Bandarin 2011, see also Singh et al. 2003; Giudici et al. 2013; Marcotte & Bourdeau 2012; Dogan 2015; Mihăilescu 2009; literature cited there; Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development), as well as recently in Bulgaria (see Кръстанова 2013, see also Михнева 2013; Марков 2017; Petrova 2017, Златкова 2017, etc.). Several scholars also underline conflicts and risks generated in communication with cultural heritage through touristic practices (see Wong 2014 and the bibliographical research there); other authors pay attention to the potential and significance of community-based tourism (Nechita 2018).

There are also several academic studies carried out in Bulgaria which, for instance, examine the

¹ Full text: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13055&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

² Full text: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13520&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

³ Full text: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=17716&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html



agricultural heritage in local communities (Петров, Петрова 2018); explore the resources of cultural and historical heritage in a local context concerning the local identity and the possibility of using the tradition as a resource in modern times with a significant focus on food and nutrition; study the village, linking the problems of cultural heritage use and intergenerational relations, or local heritage uses for sustainable development with the scope on the ICH (Кръстанова 2013), etc.

In the Republic of Serbia different works can be found, from the scientific works to the various articles about the importance of cultural and historical heritage, the sustainable tourism and development, but also, rural tourism, etc. In their article, Željko Bjeljac, Aleksandra Terzić, Suzana Lović from the Geographical Institute „Jovan Cvijić“, SANU, (2015) made a brief review on the studies of intangible cultural heritage policies in Serbia and its use as a brand for tourism. An important topic is cultural heritage digitization and digital marketing in tourism development (see Hadžić 2004, Radovic, Piper 2014; Ognjanović et al. 2019). Cultural heritage and particularly that in the rural areas has been studied as well and case studies have been published (Toncev, Podovac 2016; Nikovic, Manic 2018).

Therefore, research overlaps or borders many areas, e.g. urbanisation and depopulation of rural areas, economic benefits of cultural tourism, ecology and protected areas in connection with eco and rural tourism, problems of revitalisation, “frozen” or (re)invented traditions and heritages, the issue of authenticity, etc. We also rely on a series of local historical, ethnographic, folklore and dialectological studies accumulated over the last century and a half, devoted to many of the country’s villages.

3. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

In literature, several approaches have been described and discussed: whole assets approach; heritage approach; storytelling approach, asset clustering and mapping by theme (Fuller, Guy & Pletsch 2001). The whole assets approach involves diverse expertise and is usually used for a destination or a small area. The heritage approach focuses on physical features and is community-centred, which avoids collection information on ICH. In the opposite, the storytelling approach emphasizes the human element and its intangible manifestations. Asset clustering and mapping by theme involve only specific units and cannot achieve a complete picture (ibid.). Therefore, the current study leans on the heritage and storytelling approaches and attempts to combine their benefits. Thus, practically, local communities were involved in the process of identification – through its institutional representatives like municipalities, NGOs, business, etc.

Mapping was preceded by four activities: preliminary research, online survey, fieldwork research, and heritage datasheet elaboration. These stages were guided by different ethnographic techniques and analytical procedures and approaches to stakeholders and to heritage sites and events were not same because the main purpose of mapping is to identify specificity and specific place of each of them. “Clearly defining methodological aims and points of intersection is paramount in the effective implementation” of mapping heritage resources (Avrami 2019).

The research was done on a design that both analysts have approved and had the following stages:

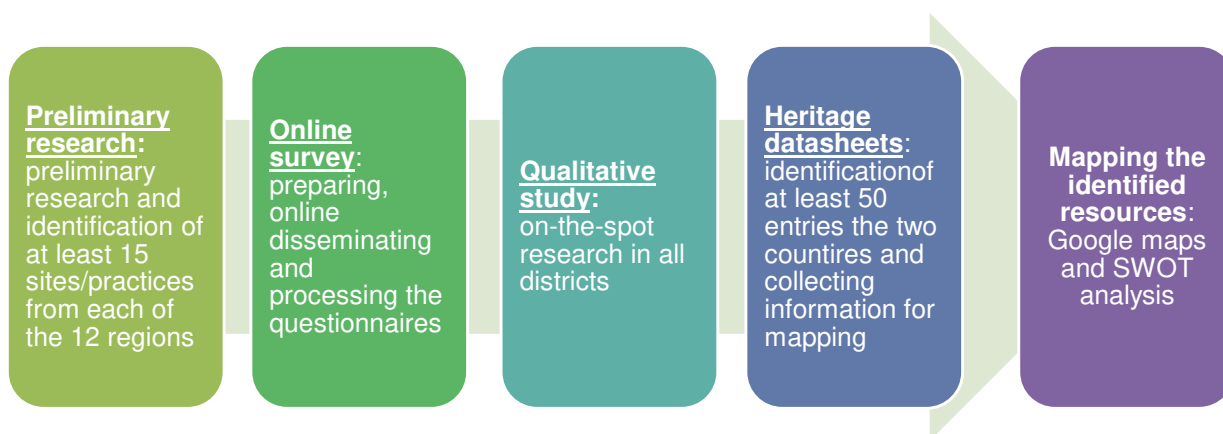


Figure 3. Research design

4. STUDY AND DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis is based on a survey conducted in November and December 2020 and in January 2021 on 13 districts in Bulgaria and Serbia. In Bulgaria, they are Bulgaria's west-border districts of Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Sofia, Pernik and Kyustendil and Serbia's east-border districts of Niš, Piroć, Zaječar, Toplica, Bor, Jablanički and Pčinjski.

4.1. PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

Preliminary research summarized analysts' previous experience in the CBR and drew directions for further research. It explored:

- ethnographic publications
- ICH and natural heritage registers
- municipalities', community centres', museums' websites
- local newspapers
- alternative tourist operators and tourists' blogs
- local development programs
- social network groups and pages, etc.

At least 15 sites/practices from each of the six regions were selected. They treated heritage from different perspectives and included natural resources, cultural heritage, crafts, and traditions. Bibliography on sites/practices containing references from scientific and popular literature was collected and researched during this phase. A review of newspaper and internet publications was made too. This vast data was explored both for identifying and excluding sites and practices. Work maps were elaborated and serve as basis for fieldwork research and resources mapping.

4.2. PREPARATION AND DISSEMINATION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

Analysts together elaborated joint questionnaire and disseminated it among target groups. It was an annex to the questionnaire for stakeholder willingness to promote identified resources and contains questions on:

- local name of the particular point of interest
- location with exact GPS coordinates because many sites have no addresses or even roads to

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- them)
- information on seasonality of the visits' possibility
 - accessibility
 - accommodation nearby
 - opening hours
 - entrance fee, if it is an already socialised site.

The two analysts used different platforms for conducting the survey – in Bulgaria, the survey was disseminated through Google Forms tool and in Serbia, it was programmed in an MS Word document with macros. Both means were successful, and the results can easily be transferred in excel tables for further processing.

The stakeholders were also asked to identify some other places, events, practices, or traditions in the area that are not well-known but could be interesting for tourists. Filling all the information out was not obligatory, so opinions have been freely expressed.

The research showed that the stakeholders were not motivated to propose sites and practice. In Serbia is a slightly different situation. There were lot of suggestions, some were good, and others were not considered as a real tourist attraction. They were eager to place themselves as a stakeholder within the research and project activities but not to take the responsibility to nominate an entry. Perhaps, it is a consequence of the long-lasting hierarchical communication tradition between various stakeholders in the past. About 60 responses were collected in Bulgaria and 44 in Serbia, and a qualitative approach was applied. Analysts consider this experience significant for the stakeholders' willingness to get responsibility for heritage resources mapping, so it will be a good measure for the stakeholders to be granted the ability to contribute to the process of mapping that is nonending.

4.3. QUALITATIVE STUDY

Based on the preliminary bibliographical research, communication with stakeholders and their responses to the questionnaire, the analysts reduced the list and conducted fieldwork research. It aimed at going in-depth in the selected cases, contact stakeholders directly, interview them in detail on sites they nominated or know, and establish the research connection 'stakeholder – site'.

In this phase, the methods and techniques for collecting the empirical base of research were diverse and included:

- semi-structured and free **interviews** with stakeholders and locals;
- an **ethnographic description** of the sites/practices related to cultural and natural heritage, observation and photo and video documentation of practices, sites of memory and forms of cultural and historical heritage in a particular settlement;
- **bibliographic study** of the existing documentation, scientific, popular science, local history, information and fiction, and statistical information related to the population, life and development of the settlement.

Because of the short time for on-the-spot study and the Christmas holidays, the analysts consistently carried out the two phases. Ethnographic fieldwork was carried out by the analysts, as follows:

Figure 4. Fieldwork research

Date	District	Sites
25 - 26 Nov 2020	Pirot District (Serbia)	Villages of Dojkinci, Slavinja. Sites: Tupavica waterfall, Rosomacki Lonci – canyon Rosomacice, a view point Kozji Kamen

27-29 Nov 2020	Zajecar and Bor District (Serbia)	Municipalities of Zajecar and Negotin. Vilages Rogljevo, Rajac, Mokranje, Bukovo Monastery, Vratna Monastery, Vratna Gates. Municipality of Kladovo, Djerdap NP and archeological site Lepenski Vir
27-29 Nov 2020	Vidin district (Bulgaria)	Vidin, Chuprene, Dolni Lom, Gorni Lom, Kula, Dimovo, Oreshets, Borovitsa, Belogradchik, Falkovets, Albotino Monastery, Magura Winery, Rabisha, Kapitanovtsi, Pokrayna, Antimovo, Kutovo, Rakovitsa Monastery
7 Dec 2020	Pirot District (Serbia)	Municipality of Pirot and Dimitrovgrad
10 Dec 2020	Jablanicki and Pcinjski District (Serbia)	Municipality of Leskovac, municipality of Surdulica, municipality of Vlasotince, Vlasina Lake
17-19 Dec 2020	Kyustendil district (Bulgaria)	Dupnitsa, Sapareva banya, Ovchartsi, Stob, Tsarvenyano, Kyustendil, Bogoslov, Slokoshtitsa, Nevestino, Lilyach, Pastuh, Vukovo, Skrino, Boboshevo
20-22 Dec 2020	Vratsa district (Bulgaria)	Mezdra, Kameno pole, Kunino, Tsarevets, Oslan Krivodol, Strupets Monastery, Lyutibrod, Tipchenitsa, Nefela, Kostelevo, Lilyache, Chiren, Vratsa, Zgorigrad
4-5 Jan 2021	Sofia district (Bulgaria)	Katina, Cheparlantsi monastery, Razboishki monastery, Berende, Dragoman, Godech, Yarlovo, Samokov, Iskar dam, Gorna malina, Koprivshtitsa
6-7 Jan 2021	Montana district (Bulgaria)	Montana, Ogosta dam, Berkovitsa, Varshets
12-13 Jan 2021	Pernik district (Bulgaria)	Pernik, Krlev dol, Yardzhilovtsi, Bogdanov dol, Batanovtsi, Breznik, Radomir, Baykalsko, Tran, Giginski monastery, Pchelina dam, Radibosh

The online survey and fieldwork research were to combine participatory and expert mapping. The stakeholders had to propose sites and practices to be included in the final selection. As already mentioned, they were asked to fill out an online questionnaire for each entry. Eventually, 27 stakeholders entered 58 sites or practices, and 30 of these entries were made by 4 stakeholders. The Municipality of Vratsa entered 12 sites, the Municipality of Chavdar and Osogovo Tourist Association – 7 each, and Tourist centre of Botevgrad – 4. The others took part with 1, 2 or 3 points of interest. As the first issue concerns unevenness of the stakeholders' response and is a sign of their motivation to participate in the survey, the second problem is that most of these points would either are not unexplored or are not suitable for cross-border quest tourism.

For instance, the Municipality of Sapareva banya entered Seven Rila Lakes which are among the Bulgaria's most popular tourist sites. Within the fieldwork research, another site was identified – Ovtchartsi waterfall and the intangible heritage of 'valyavitsa' (or 'tepavitsa' – the craft of washing carpets with river water). In the town of Sapareva banya is also the hottest geyser in the Balkans. Furthermore, Sapareva banya is a spa resort. Another example – the Municipality of Chavdar entered, among others,

the event ‘Month of the book in the municipality of Chavdar’. Perhaps, this practice is of great local significance, but it has no potential to attract tourist in general.

Other points dropped out because neither their potential to attract tourists is high enough nor can be included in good transborder routes. Hence, only 8 of all 58 entries were selected and other 48 were collected from stakeholders’ information and during fieldwork research. This result does not mean privileged expert position but lack of experience for large-scale cross-border thinking of the local stakeholders. Still, it is a good sign that most of them are aware of unexplored local heritage or are ready to use all chances to promote these undeveloped assets. Anyway, the stakeholders will be able to contribute in future and benefit from the analysis and the BMG.

In Serbia, 44 stakeholders filled out an online questionnaire and they were asked to suggest sites and practices to be included in the final selection. For each entry they were asked to fill an online questionnaire. At the end, 44 stakeholders suggested 95 sites or practices. Jablanica district entered 38 sites and practices, 17 were from Nis district, in Pirot district there were 14, in Pcinjski district – 12, Bor district had 10, and only 4 in Zajecar district.

Some of these sites are already popular tourist destinations, for example, the Municipality of Zajecar entered Felix Romuliana archaeological site or the Municipality of Leskovac entered tourist event Rostiljijada in Leskovac. Some of the entries do not have enough tourist potentials to attract visitors or they have local events that, in general, are not attractive to the tourists. For instance, the Municipality of Bojnik suggested 12 sites or events, but only few can be on a tourist map. Some of the events, like Christmas Eve in front of the church of St. Nicholas or Children’s walk “Our future” are local events and they have no potential to attract tourists in general. Eventually, 36 stakeholders were selected with 72 entries.



Figure 5. Process of selection of the identified unexplored resources

4.4. HERITAGE DATASHEETS

Unexplored resources mapping is based on a database of datasheets of all selected entries. Overall, 134 sites and practices from the six districts in Bulgaria and six districts in Serbia were selected and Heritage datasheets were elaborated. Datasheets templates were elaborated in coordination with National Tourism Cluster “Bulgarian Guide”, being a Lead partner of the project Questour, and require information on the heritage site or practice history, subject, protection form, exact GPS coordinates, etc. Information in the datasheets has been collected from various sources and do not reflect only survey responses. As the geographical map is the horizontal plane of mapping, the datasheets are its vertical depth because they emphasise each point and provide all the information that a stakeholder might need. This informational content cannot be overview generally but makes the mapping dense and facilitates its functions.



Each datasheet contains the following information:

- Abbreviation
- Photos
- Name of the heritage
- GPS Coordinates
- Location/ country
- Thematic research field
- Category
- Ownership
- Type of protection
- Present use
- Past use
- Story of the heritage
- Description of the heritage

Basic information including contact data, notes on the point exploitation and clues on nearby sites is summarised in tables where the entries are in alphabetic order of their abbreviations. All these data were combined with Google map and, thus, mapping result is useful for all stakeholders on the tourism market in CBR. Standard templates facilitate bilateral use of the databases.

4.5. MAPPING

This stage has narrow temporal and methodological connection with the previous one because selection of the 134 entries is a result of identification and conceptualisation of particular heritage sites and practices. Bulgarian and Serbian analyst elaborated a joint interactive Google map with all selections to work flexibly and in a real geographical context (Appendix 1). The reason for choosing Google Maps' free tools is that here all points might be superimposed on all information already collected and posted on the Google map, i.e. transportation facilities, hotels and restaurants, other tourist sites, etc. Another important feature of Google Maps is its dynamics. If one collects all this information in a particular moment, it might be irrelevant in the future, but in Google Maps, it is continuously updated by business owners and customers. So, the mapping manages spatially cultural and natural heritage resources in the context of all tourism assets that might be necessary.

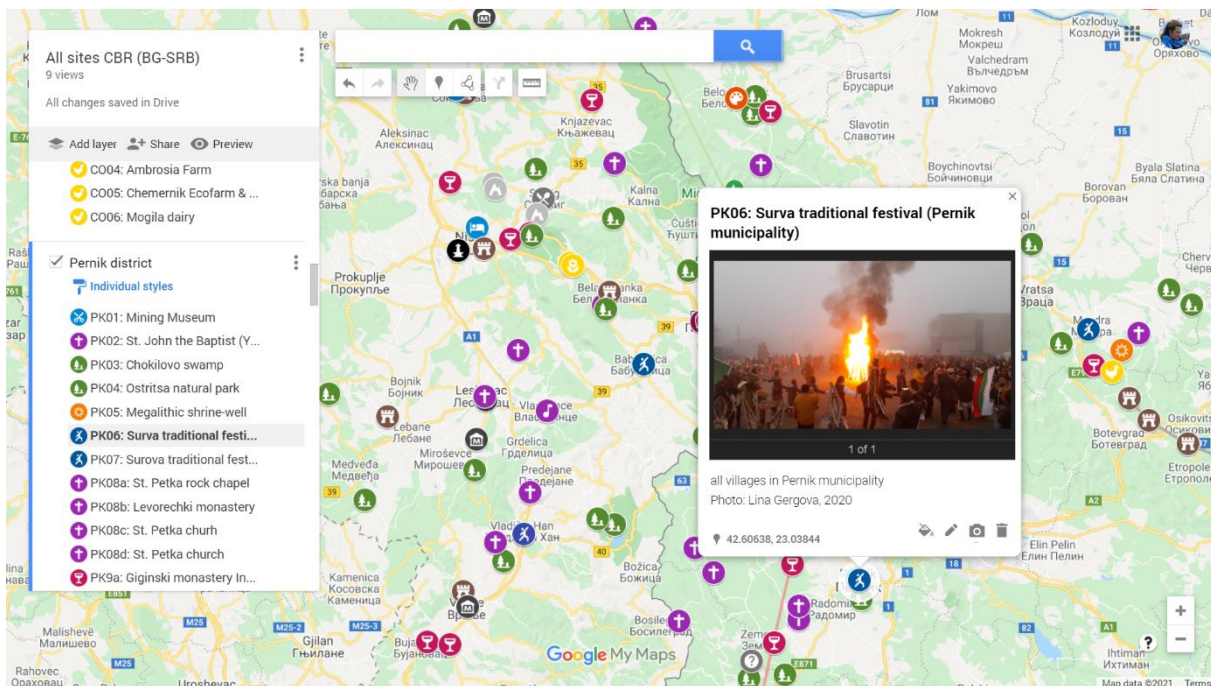


Figure 6. Joint Google map of selected entries in CBR (editors' view screenshot)

Google map also offers the opportunity to use standard icons for labelling the entries in several categories: Christian heritage, natural heritage, organic farm, winery, culinary event or site, fortress or archaeological site, cave, festival, museum, craft, ethno village, etc. Thus, mapping by theme is partially done, and it may facilitate particular stakeholders.

However, the most critical process is not putting the entries on the map, but the very selection. It is a process of identification and conceptualisation of the unexplored resources and ICH. As already mentioned, heritage identification is a complex process that always arises the issues of competence, ownership, and the right to construct the past as heritage. So, it is essential to emphasise that the process of identification is based on procedures of conceptualisation. Heritage is not something existing in reality but a scope, a point of view toward the past and the world around us. The heritage value is not initially contained in the artefact, place or practice, but the people add it to the object.

In the process of identification analyst relied on the common practice of constructing heritage: legal protection, community safeguarding and transmission, organising conservation and socialisation, narrating the past through particular site of practice etc. For instance, some wineries were selected but others not because the first base their production on traditional vine varieties, terroirs and producing technologies. A megalithic sanctuary was included in the list because the village mayor has marked the road and raises funds for its study and socialisation. In Pirot, although the "Pirot's hard yellow cheese" is far better known, in its production there is no strict control and respect for the traditional method of production. That is not the case with all the producers, but that is why it was decided that "Horseshoe Pirot ironed sausage" should be an authentic product whose raw materials and method of preparation are very strictly defined, in accordance with what has always been the case, and what many interesting stories are related to.

The next methodological issue that is critical is what heritage sites and practices might be considered unexplored resources. This problem contains two parts: unexplored + resource, so the point should be undeveloped or underestimated but to have the potential to enter the tourism market. The analyst

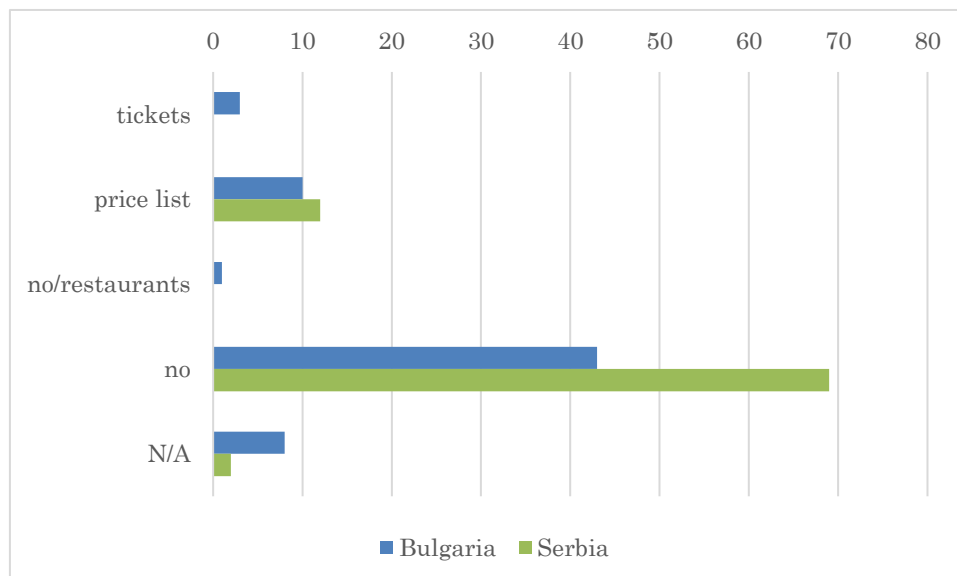
elaborated several criteria that could not be met completely by all entries but, still, ground the selection.

Criteria 1: Unexplored or less explored site/practice

Only sites and practices that have been underestimated and stayed outside scholars' attention and local stakeholders' management entered the selection list. As more than 200 entries have been collected, it was necessary the most suitable ones to be selected, so all that are part of standard tours, ordinary tour guides' recommendations to visit, '100 national tourist sites' movement, etc., were excluded. Some of the entries have been studied in the past but were left later on. Some of the sites are less explored compared to the others in the region (it refers mostly to Sofia district).

The entrance fee reflects to what extend the point is explored. It is presumed that the access to explored sites would be paid. Besides restaurants, hotels, dairies and organic farms, where entrance fee is not available but still experiencing heritage is paid, only 3 sites in Bulgaria and 10 In Serbia require paying ticket for visit (a festival, museums, a gallery, caves, archaeological sites). These sites and events were selected because their potential is considered not developed and they seem underestimated.

Figure 7. Entrance fee



Criteria 2: Value

A tourist site value is a complex of its aesthetic, scientific, cultural and social values (Pralong 2005). Each of them contributes to its potential for capitalisation and market place. It does not mean that each segment should be high but that the sum of them must ensure a site's successful development into a product. For instance, the successful ski resorts perhaps have no scientific or cultural value at all but the aesthetic, meaning leisure and fun, and social, meaning economic and demographic impact on the local society, are high enough.

As already mentioned, aesthetic values include leisure, fun, scenic enjoyment, aesthetic delight, and all these intimate individual experiences that move most tourists. Scientific value also contains educational benefits that, presumably, involve students but also adults take cognitive journeys. Cultural value expands tourists' artistic and social knowledge and contributes to intercultural dialogue. Social or



economic value targets locals or the producers and is what tourists leave but not take (ibid.). Other important features connected with the values are the site's or practice's representativeness or rarity. Recently, the ecological interest becomes more and more a leading motivation.

A tourist site's particular value also depends on its use context – in a route with other similar points, for a one-day trip during a more extended stay in a spa or ski resort, as well as on visitors and their notions and background. In the current study, sites and practices were selected to elaborate a BMG and offer them to various stakeholders, which makes the task enormous difficult because the sites' and practices' values have to be evaluated with no vision of a particular market. Another critical perspective is the value conservation/safeguarding, so moreover, the value is a feature that has to be kept and sustained (du Cros 2001).

To illustrate the process of defining value of a site/practice, some examples would be considered:

- 1) Cheparlinski monastery (Sofia district) is a relatively new one, from the interwar period. There are some curious legends about its establishment that connects it with miracles and a medieval cemetery, but it is not distinguished from the perspective of architecture or religious history. The monastery's yard is beautiful, and its host is a charming and educated person. The monastery is located in an area that other two monasteries and a church of extreme scientific importance are as well. Furthermore, the area is mountainous, and nature is clean and welcoming. The Cheparlinski monastery was selected not because of its own value but as an item in a chain. Eventually, it contributes to this sequence's common value (see CO1a, CO01b and CO01c). The site's scientific and cultural values are not essential, but its aesthetic and social values are important in this case.
- 2) GOATMILK festival that takes place annually in the village Gorna Bela rechka (Vashets municipality), contrariwise, is of great cultural, scientific (educational) and aesthetic importance but this festival's social value is so high that it deserves to be included in the list and to be visited. Every year, it makes the village vivid and transform the old ruined houses in scenes and the locals – into hosts and artists. The practice is satisfying both for hosts and visitors.
- 3) Days of Caribrodsko sušenica festival take place annually in the town of Dimitrovgrad (Pirot district) and is, similarly, a great example of cultural, scientific (educational) and aesthetic importance, and it has grown in size over the years since its foundation in 2014, thus proving its social importance. From a one-day event in 2014, to a two-day event in 2019, it proves to be a mutually beneficial event for both the locals who compete in the making of susenica, and tourists, that get a taste of the traditional Southern Serbian cuisine and explore some examples of local craftsmanship, which is the reason to include the event onto the list.
- 4) Vucjanka river canyon's main value (Jablanica district) is its aesthetic importance, for leisure and fun, with activities that can include swimming, hiking and canyoning. More importantly, its close vicinity to other sites, of cultural and scientific value (Hydroelectric plan in Vucje) or purely cultural value (Odzaklija church, and Jasunjski monasteries) puts it on the list as an important link in a fully rounded destination making.

Criteria 3: Potential

The site or practice should not only be attractive, interesting, impressive and unfamiliar, but it is needed to contain a real potential to transform into a tourism product or, if it is already such, to develop perceivably. So, not only heritage value but also the commodification of market appeal matters (du Cros 2001). That depends on the site's or practice's its condition, the T&H infrastructure around it, the choice of tourism market and brand, legal framework, etc. The site or practice's economic potential also depends on its geographical context and remoteness from other similar points. For instance, T&H infrastructure is essential. Regarding hospitality facilities, in the CBR there are enough hotels, huts, and guest houses in the towns and villages, and population density is enough to provide accommodation nearby. The following charts still give information on the accessibility of the sites that measure its potential.

Figure 8. Road Access

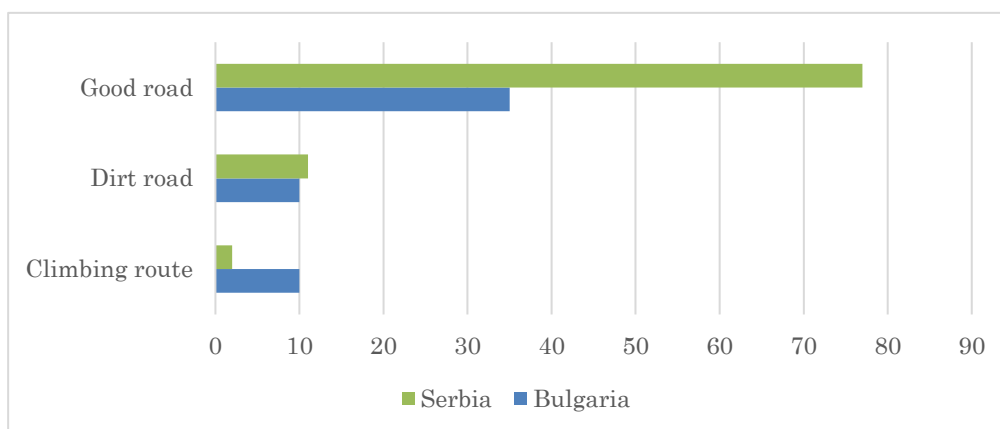


Figure 9. Parking lot

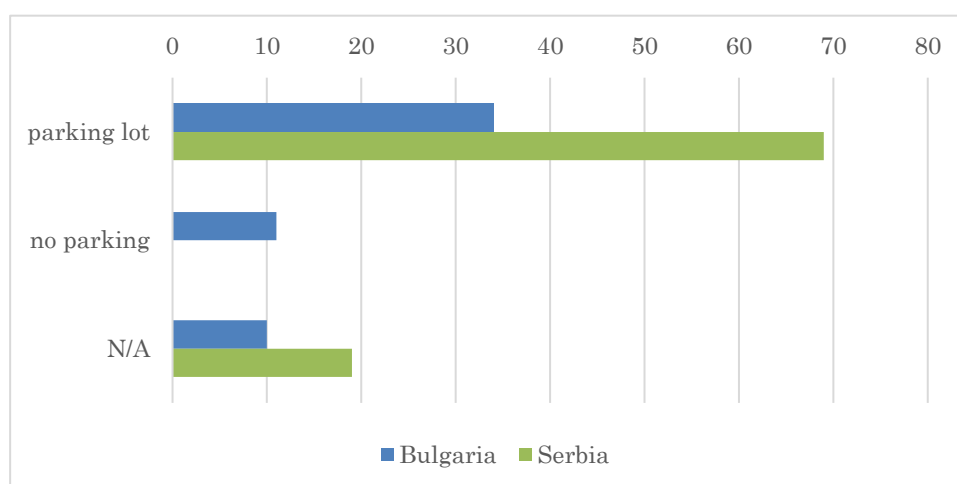
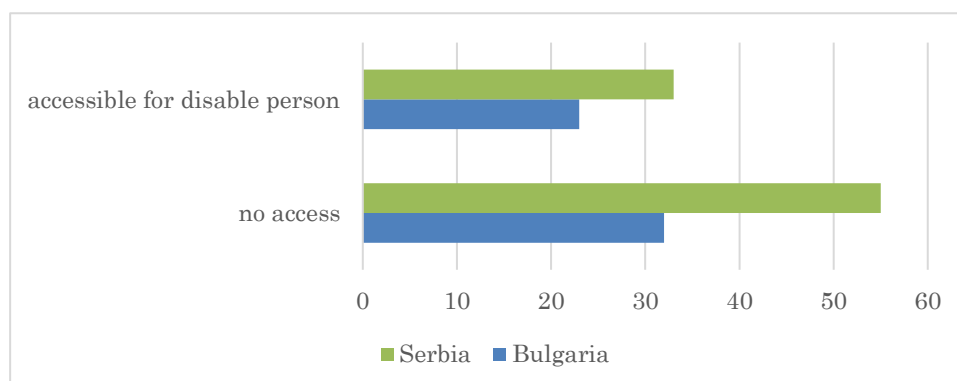


Figure 10. Access for people with disabilities



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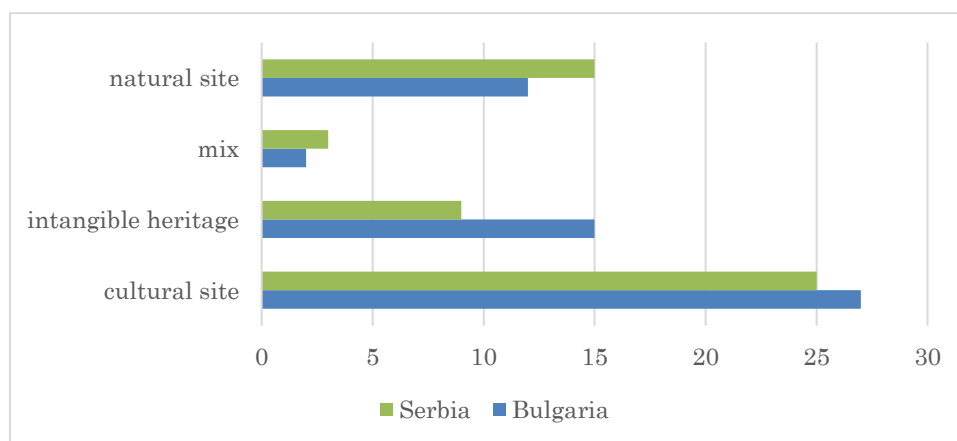
The figures above do not reflect the situation ultimately; the responses have to be analysed qualitatively. Some sites have no excellent road access or parking lot, but this is the core of their attractiveness – they are in wild nature, and only pedestrian trails lead to them. Hence, this limited access is not a weakness but has to be considered. As displayed in the chart, the more critical problem is the lousy access for people with disabilities. Unfortunately, it is a common problem in both Bulgaria and Serbia and not only for tourism but also for locals. It also must be taken into consideration while using data for elaborating tourist routes and organising visits.

Regarding a heritage site or practice potential its ability to accommodate negative impacts derived from increased levels of visitation has to be considered as well (Yan et al. 2017). All selected entries are able to accept increasing number of visitors but, in some point, the tourist flows should be organised in order the site to be protected, e.g. building trails and organising entrances for natural sites, providing accommodation or camp sites for festivals visitors, organising park lots, etc.

Criteria 4: Diversity

Entries from diverse domains were selected: natural parks, megaliths, rock phenomena, traditional crafts and industrial heritage, religious sites, galleries, farms, caves, wineries, feasts and festivals, etc. Tourism market demands diversification and diversity is considered an instrument in the BMG. Diversity does not mean pluralism and parity but an attempt any kind of tourist enthusiasm, curiosity, and ambition to be satisfied. Diversity also expands CBR tourism opportunities from the perspective of local, regional, and global markets, and facilitates elaborating local cross-border brands and developing branded zones and routes. Furthermore, diverse heritage involves diverse stakeholders as far as all they are specialised in safeguarding, protecting and promoting its various domains. It is important to be explained that the following chart reflects a concept because heritage types cannot always be differed categorically.

Figure 11. Heritage types

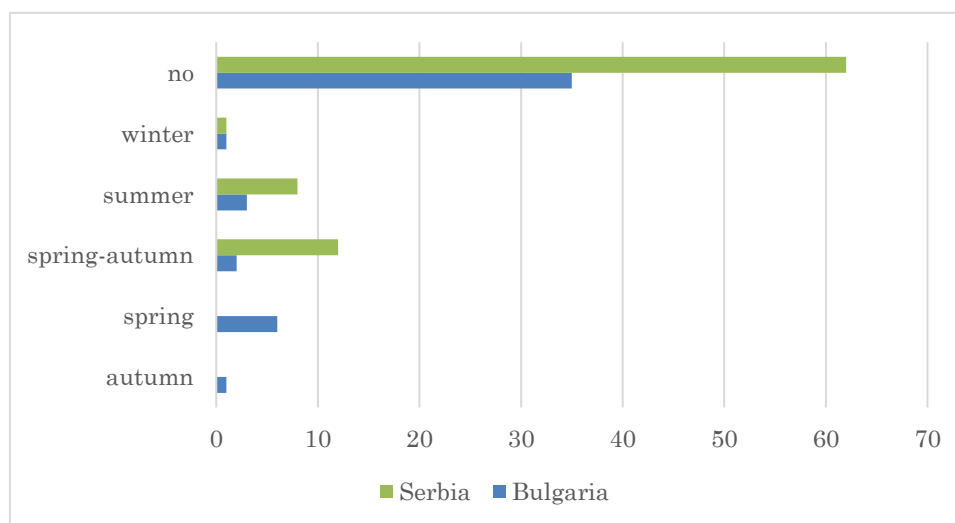


Criteria 5: Sustainability

Sustainability is based on the connection between the site/practice and the locality, low seasonality, and use according to its traditional reception. All selected points are 'attached' either to more familiar tourist sites or to each other in chains or groups to form a route. They do not need huge further investments or economic, legal, or social changes, just socialisation and a new approach for communication with customers. Thus, they will keep their initial purpose and form. The chart presents seasonality of the selected points.

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Figure 12. Seasonality of the site/practice



5. SWOT ANALYSIS

Natural heritage, tangible cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage require a diverse approach to study, protection/safeguarding, commodification, exploitation, socialisation, etc. SWOT analysis of these three groups of sites and practices that the analysts have selected is, as a result of this, separated into three. Although the natural and cultural heritage cannot be theoretically and empirically separated, their use as a tourist product, their legal protection and the infrastructure settings they need offer different challenges and opportunities.

5.1. NATURAL HERITAGE

In this section, a variety of natural heritage sites has been selected (see Appendix 1, Map 1):

- BH04: Venetsa Cave (Dimovo municipality, Vidin district)
- BP02: Rock phenomenon Bozhiya most [God's Bridge], Kadin vir & Rock labyrinth Peshketo (Vratsa municipality)
- BP04: Galabarnika caves and the rock Chervenitsa (Roman municipality, Vratsa district)
- BP06: Chuklite Rocks (Mezdra municipality, Vratsa district)
- M01: Sopovo valley on Botunya river (Varshets municipality, Montana district)
- M04: Waterfall Lanzhin skok & Kopren peak (Georgi Damyanovo municipality, Montana district)
- M05: Haiduk waterfalls and Kom peak area (Berkovitsa municipality, Montana district)
- PK03: Chokilovo swamp (Radomir municipality, Pernik district)
- PK04: Ostritsa natural park (Pernik/Radomir municipality, Pernik district)
- KH05: Centuries-old redwoods (Kyustendil municipality)
- KH07: Shegava canyon (Nevestino municipality, Kyustendil district)
- BO09: Lazar's cave (Bor district)
- BO10: Vratnjanske Gates (Bor district)

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- LE04: Vucjanka River Canyon (Jablanica district)
- NI02: Brljavski kamen Sićevo (Niš district)
- NI08: Abbys Pandiralo (Niš district)
- NI10: Niševačka gorge (Niš district)
- NI11: Prekonoška cave (Niš district)
- NI12: Samar cave (Niš district)
- NI18: Old Oak in Divljana (Niš district)
- VR01: Jovačka lakes (Pčinja district)
- PI02: Jerma Special Nature Reserve (Pirotdistrict)
- PI09: Smilovska lakes (Pirotdistrict)
- PI10: Skok waterfall (Pirotdistrict)
- ZA04: Bogovinska cave (Timok district)
- ZA07: Crni Timok river source (Timok district)

On the map, it might be observed that the natural sites are mainly in the mountains, except few caves. Most of them are very close to the border that was facilitated also by the fact that it follows the mountain ridge (in Stara Planina, Ryy, Milevska Planina, Chudinska Planina, etc.). Various rock phenomena, several natural parks, a swamp, waterfalls, caves, etc. entered the selection.

Strengths:

- Unique natural phenomena not only for niche tourism
- Unspoiled nature, no crowds (some completely unexplored and not socialised)
- Photography inspirations
- Built nature trails and picnic facilities (in places)
- Recently opened for visitors or socialised
- Some challenging sites for extreme adventures
- Several natural parks that provide complex experience
- Close to more popular sites or to transport connections (not all)
- Various protected plant and animal species

Weaknesses:

- In the shade of more popular sites nearby
- Small capacity (in places)
- No marked roads and organised entrance (in places)
- Only pedestrian access or not accessible for people with disabilities
- No public transport (in places)
- No accommodation and restaurants nearby (in places)
- Some sites are seasonal

Opportunities:

- No close limits in further development
- Cross-border events
- Suitable for niche tourism (mountaineering, photography, extreme activities, eco-tourism, fishing, hunting, kayaking, canyoning, etc.)
- Family tourism (not all)
- Suitable for combination with other natural or cultural sites nearby
- Easy to combine similar sites into cross-border routes

Threats:

- Climate changes
- Legal protection can prevent developing the hospitality services
- Strong regional competition from other tourist destinations
- Especially exposed to all the risks of mass tourism

5.2. TANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

The following cultural heritage sites were selected (see Appendix 1, Map 2):

- BH01: St. Paraskeva church, Dolni Lom (Chuprene municipality, Vidin district)
- BH02: Monument of Mourning Soldier (Bulgarian-Serboan War of 1885), Vidin
- BH05: Salon of Naive and intuitive art at Town Gallery of Belogradchik (Vidin district)
- BH06: St. Trinity Monastery of Rakovitsa and Chernoglav Peak (Makresh municipality, Vidin district)
- BP01: St. Elijah Monastery of Strupets (Roman municipality, Vratsa District)
- BP07: Megalithic Sanctuary Peshtta, Oslen Krivodol (Mezdra municipality, Vratsa District)
- M02: Submerged church of former village of Zhivovtsi (Montana municipality)
- CO01a: St. Peter church and 2 obrotsi (holly places), Berende (Dragoman municipality, Sofia district)
- CO01b: Cheparlenski monastery (Dragoman municipality, Sofia district)
- CO01c: Razboishki monastery (Godech municipality, Sofia district)
- CO03a: Bozhenishki urvich fortress (Botevgrad municipality, Sofia district)
- CO03b: Borovets Fortress (Pravets municipality, Sofia district)
- CO03c: Ostroma fortress (Pravets municipality, Sofia district)
- CO03d: Cherti grad fortress (Etropole municipality, Sofia district)
- PK01: Mining Museum, Pernik
- PK02: St. John the Baptist (Yoan Letni) church (Radomir municipality, Pernik district)
- PK05: Megalithic shrine-well (Tran municipality, Pernik district)
- PK08a: St. Petka rock chapel, Tran (Pernik district)
- PK08b: Levorechki monastery (Tran municipality, Pernik district)
- PK08c: St. Petka church, Penkyovtsi (Tran municipality, Pernik district)
- PK08d: St. Petka church, Radibosh (Tran municipality, Pernik district)
- KH04: Provirkalkata megalithic sanctuary, Lilyach (Nevestino municipality, Kyustendil district)
- KH06a: St. Trinity church, Pastuh (Nevestino municipality, Kyustendil district)
- KH06b: St. Petka church, Vukovo (Nevestino municipality, Kyustendil district)
- KH06c: St. Nicolas church, Vukovo (Boboshevo municipality, Kyustendil district)
- KH06d: St. Theodor church (Boboshevo municipality, Kyustendil district)
- BO02: Bukovo monastery (Bor District)
- BO04: Archaeological site Rudna Glava (Bor District)
- BO05: Permanent exhibition "In the homeland of metal" (Bor District)
- BO06: Rajac village- Pivnice (Bor District)
- BO07: Rogljevo village- Pivnice (Bor District)
- LE01: Church of Ožaklija (Jablanica district)
- LE03: Janjuški monasteries (Jablanica district)
- LE07: Kosta Stamenković Memorial House (Jablanica district)
- LE08: Ethno house Dimitrijevic (Jablanica district)
- LE09: Textile museum (Jablanica district)
- LE11: Justiniana Prima Archeological Site (Jablanica district)
- NI14: Monument park Bujanj (Niš district)
- NI16: Archaeological site Remezijana (Niš district)
- NI17: Monastery St. Dimitrije (Niš district)
- VR03: Monastery of St. Elijah (Pčinja district)
- VR05: Monastery of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin (Pčinja district)
- VR06: Archaeological site Kale Krsevica (Pčinja district)
- VR08: Bora Stanković House Museum (Pčinja district)
- VR12: Markovo Kale (Pčinja district)
- VR13: St. Trinity Church in Izvor (Pčinja district)

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- ZA05: Native house of sculptor Ljubinka Savic – Grasi (Timok district)
- ZA06: Monastery Krepičevac (Timok district)
- ZA08: Turkish bath Amam (Timok district)
- ZA09: Church of the Holy Mother of God (Timok district)
- ZA10: Soko Grad - Falcon city (Timok district)

Most entries are Orthodox Christian heritage or archaeological sites, as well as several ethno-villages, house-museums, megaliths, monuments, a gallery collection, etc. Almost all are connected with diverse layers of the region history: from Antiquity and pagan shrines, Rome and Ancient Greek remains, Medieval buildings and Revival heritage. Only a few selections are linked with the contemporary history of Bulgaria and Serbia and these entries aim to jump over regional historical contradictions. The following SWOTs reflect general situation but do not refer to every site particularly.

Strengths:

- Valuable church architecture and art monuments (in many cases more significant than the more popular ones)
- Old-Calendar monastery that support cross-border cultural dialogue
- Usually in combination with valuable natural environment
- Several clusters
- Picturesque views
- Traditional architecture craft

Weaknesses:

- Need better infrastructure: T&H in the area, on-site visitors' facilities
- Specialised, a guide is needed
- Suitable only for short visits of small groups
- No particular working hours and hosts
- Not much preserved or well protected

Opportunities:

- Other attraction in the area
- Cross-border events
- Suitable for niche tourism (photography, drone shooting, archaeology, pilgrimage, LARP games, rural tourism, etc.)
- One-day trips during longer stay in the spa and ski resorts
- Easy to combine similar sites into cross-border routes

Threats:

- Low public funds for restauration and conservation
- Religious barriers for non-religious tourists
- Mass tourism development should be carefully conducted
- Strong regional competition from other tourist destinations
- Tension between local and national policies toward cultural heritage

5.3. INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

ICH resources that have been selected are as follows (see Appendix 1, Map 3):

- BH07: Madona Inn, Falkovets (Belogradchik municipality, Vidin district)
- BP03: Tipchenitsa Winery (Mezdra municipality, Vratsa district)
- BP08: Festival of medieval traditions, life and culture, Mezdra (Vratsa district)
- M03: Festival of wind bands 'Diko Iliev', Montana
- M06: GOATMILK festival, Gorna Bela rechka (varshets municipality, Montana district)
- CO02: Traditional knife-making, Kostenets village (Kostenets municipality, Sofia district)
- CO04: Ambrosia Farm (Svoje municipality, Sofia district)
- CO06: Mogila dairy (Godech municipality, Sofia district)

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- PK06: Surva traditional festival (Pernik municipality)
- PK07: Surova traditional festival (Breznik municipality, Pernik district)
- PK9a: Giginski monastery – food production (Breznik municipality, Pernik district)
- PK9b: Zhablyano monastery – food production (Zemen municipality, Pernik district)
- KH01: Kopilovtsi monastery – food production (Kyustendil municipality)
- KH03: Bandera ranch & Svezhest dairy farm (Kyustendil municipality)
- NI09: Belmužijada Event (Niš district)
- NI15: Banica Days Event (Niš district)
- VR02: Vidovdan Days – event (Pčinja district)
- VR04: Overload – event (Pčinja district)
- PI06: Vurdijada - Days of Vurda (Pirot district)
- PI06: Days of Caribrodskaa sušenica (Pirot district)
- LE02: Roštiljijada Leskovac – event (Jablanica district)
- LE05: Carnival Leskovac – event (Jablanica district)
- LE06: Wine Ball – event (Jablanica district)

In this section, mainly food and wine production traditions and feasts dedicated to food are included because in CBR specific traditional vine varieties and recipes have been kept. In some cases, a tradition is represented by organic farms or wineries, in others – by its brand and festival. A couple of traditional festivals are also included in the list – they are in the representative list of UNESCO of ICH of humanity but have not been offered on the tourist market yet (Surva festivals in Pernik and Breznik municipalities). Several festivals of modern and contemporary art also found a place in the selection. Traditional crafts like mining, textile and knife producing and carpet washing that are still vivid are presented as well. The SWOT table displays the general situation.

Strengths:

- The only places where some traditional recipes might be tasted
- Traditional crafts that are quite rare in the present
- Wine and food terroirs
- Festivals that contribute to the sense of place and for intercultural dialogue
- Offer experience not only visit
- Rich locality/ethnicity
- Good access and visitors' facilities

Weaknesses:

- Seasonality or opening on demand (except museums)
- Not suitable for large groups (except festivals)
- Too high commodification, in some cases
- Not adjusted for tourists
- Organised for visiting, consuming and purchasing but not for training and practicing
- Not cheap
- No common calendar

Opportunities:

- Suitable for combination with other natural or cultural sites nearby
- Cross-border events and routes
- Suitable for niche tourism (culinary, wine, photography, eco and rural tourism, training, etc.)
- Suitable for supplementary events within a longer stay in the spa and ski resorts

Threats:

- Too dependable on economic and demographic situation
- No local, national or regional policies for safeguarding
- Need public funds to be carried out
- Modern hygienic and financial requirements sometimes are not applicable



5.4. MIXED ENTRIES

As mentioned above, the heritage sites and practices division into three groups is not absolute, however, in the list, few entries are a combination of two related sites or a site and a practice that are of different domains. They are predominantly in Bulgaria (see Appendix 1, Map 4):

- BH03: Borovitsa Rocks & Borovitsa Winery (Dimovo municipality, Vidin District)
- BH06: St. Trinity Monastery of Rakovitsa and Chernoglav Peak (Makresh municipality, Vidin district)
- BH08: St. Trinity church of Kapitanovtsi and Festival 'Danube and Tomok link us' (Vidin municipality)
- BP05: Belite skali nature trail & St. George medieval basilica, Lyutibrod (Mezdra municipality, Vratsa district)
- CO05: Chemernik Ecofarm & Pod kamiko waterfall (Svoje municipality, Sofia district)
- KH02: Goritsa waterfall and 'valyavitsi' (traditional carpets washing), Ovtchartsitsi (Sapareva banya municipality, Kyustendil district)
- BO10: Vratnjanske Gates (rocks) and Vratna Monastery (Bor district)
- NI13: Plantation Tamnjanica – eco plantation with art colony (Niš district)
- NI17, NI18: Monastery St. Dimitrije and Old Oak in Divljana (Niš district)

The sites that combine diverse heritage patterns called here mixed entries offer specific benefits and challenges. In general, the event limits calendric use of the site but also add value to it. For instance, the church of Kapitanovtsi does not deserve a particular visit if the tourist is not a specialist or is not particularly interested in the legends and history of that church. However, if one attends the festival, visiting the church would contribute to his/her experience and knowledge about the local community. On the other hand, mixed sites attract a wider audience: a cultural heritage site near a nature trail might be the motivation for choosing exactly this trail, among others (cases BH06 and BP05). Sometimes, the intangible practice is connected with a natural phenomenon, and they cannot be separated (case KH02). Hence, combining the sites contributes to the value and potential of all parts of that combination and enrich opportunities for developing a tourist product.

6. CONCLUSION

Mapping natural and cultural heritage sites and intangible practices is the base for tourist product elaboration and tourism market development both at regional and at cross-border level. The mapping results would also be useful for other cultural industry sectors (souvenirs and traditional food production, entertainment industry, education, creative industries, etc. Sustainable cultural local and regional industry relies on the parallel development of all its sectors and general social and economic settings. The heritage mapping is a method for evaluation of these settings.

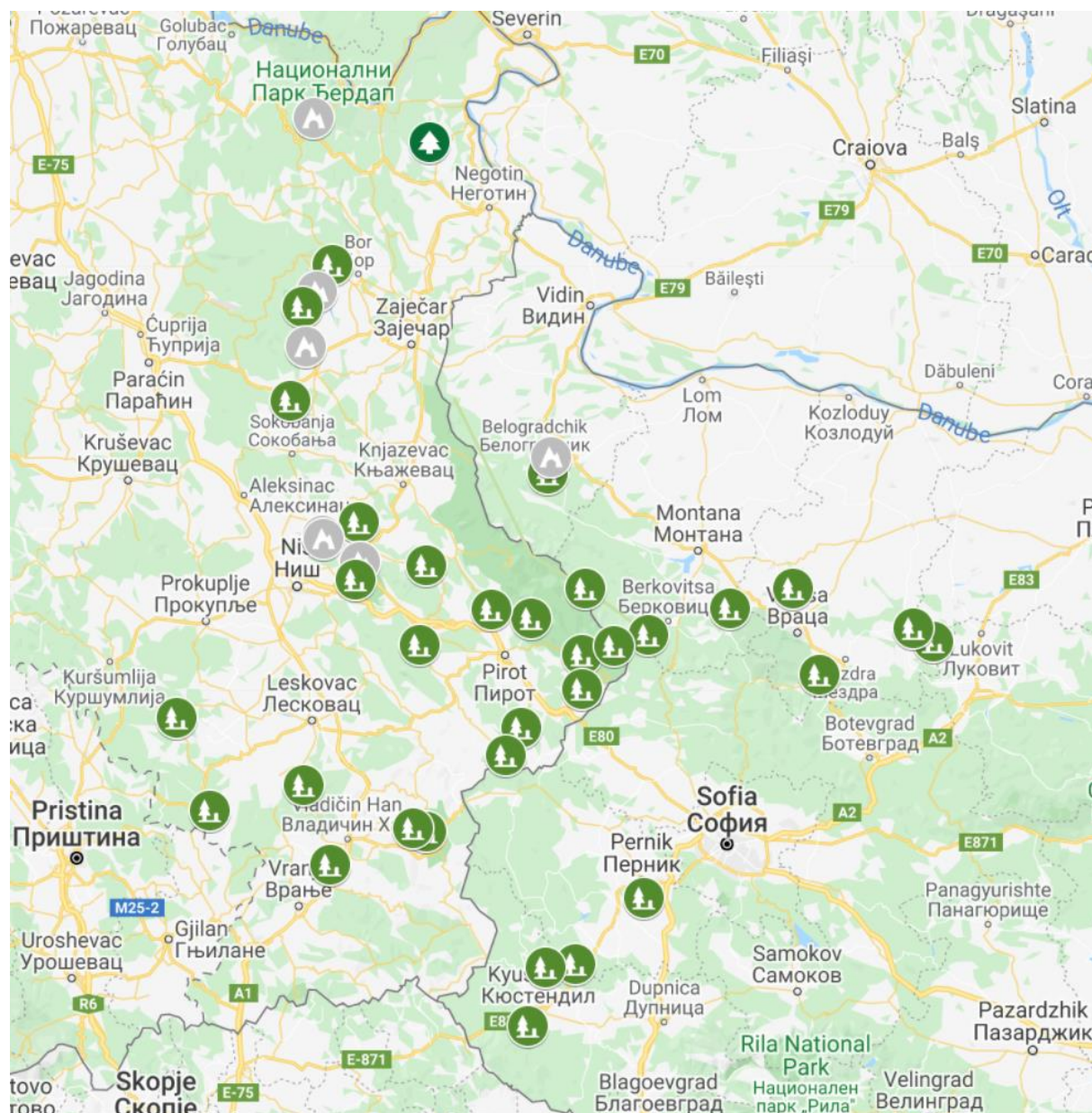
Tourism is one way for the heritage to be socialised and safeguarded, but sometimes it is the most damaging and devastating threat. Therefore, heritage use should be **less invasive and socially responsible**, which is among the essential conditions for sustainable tourism and the economy. Tourism organisers must work with local communities in elaborating tourist products. On the other hand, organisers should encourage local business and industries because they contribute to the attractiveness and sustainability of the area.

Tourism as travelling and experiencing cultural and natural distinctions and resemblances contributes a lot to **CBR cohesion** and opening to the economically more developed regions. Mapping heritage is the first step, and the next are connected with T&H sector development and opening more checkpoints. Elaborating cross-border packages for distant and foreign tourists would influence the tourism market in the CBR. Tourism development is not an end in itself, but it is a condition for **harmonic social, economic, environmental and cultural growth**, especially in regions like that on the two sides of the Bulgaria-Serbian border.

APPENDIX 1: MAPPING THE UNEXPLORED RESOURCES AND INTANGIBLE HERITAGE IN CBR:

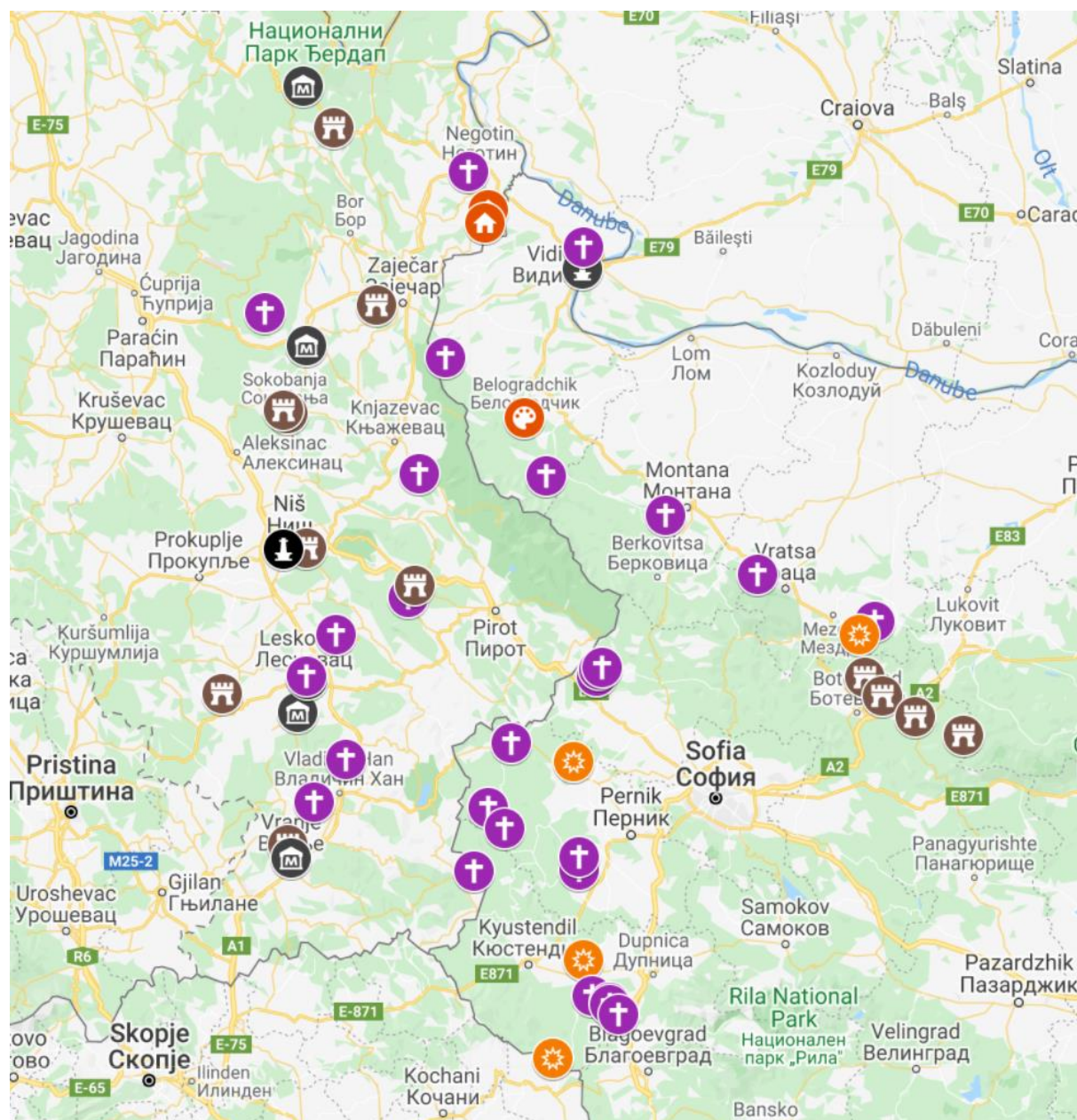
MAPS

MAP 1: Natural heritage sites



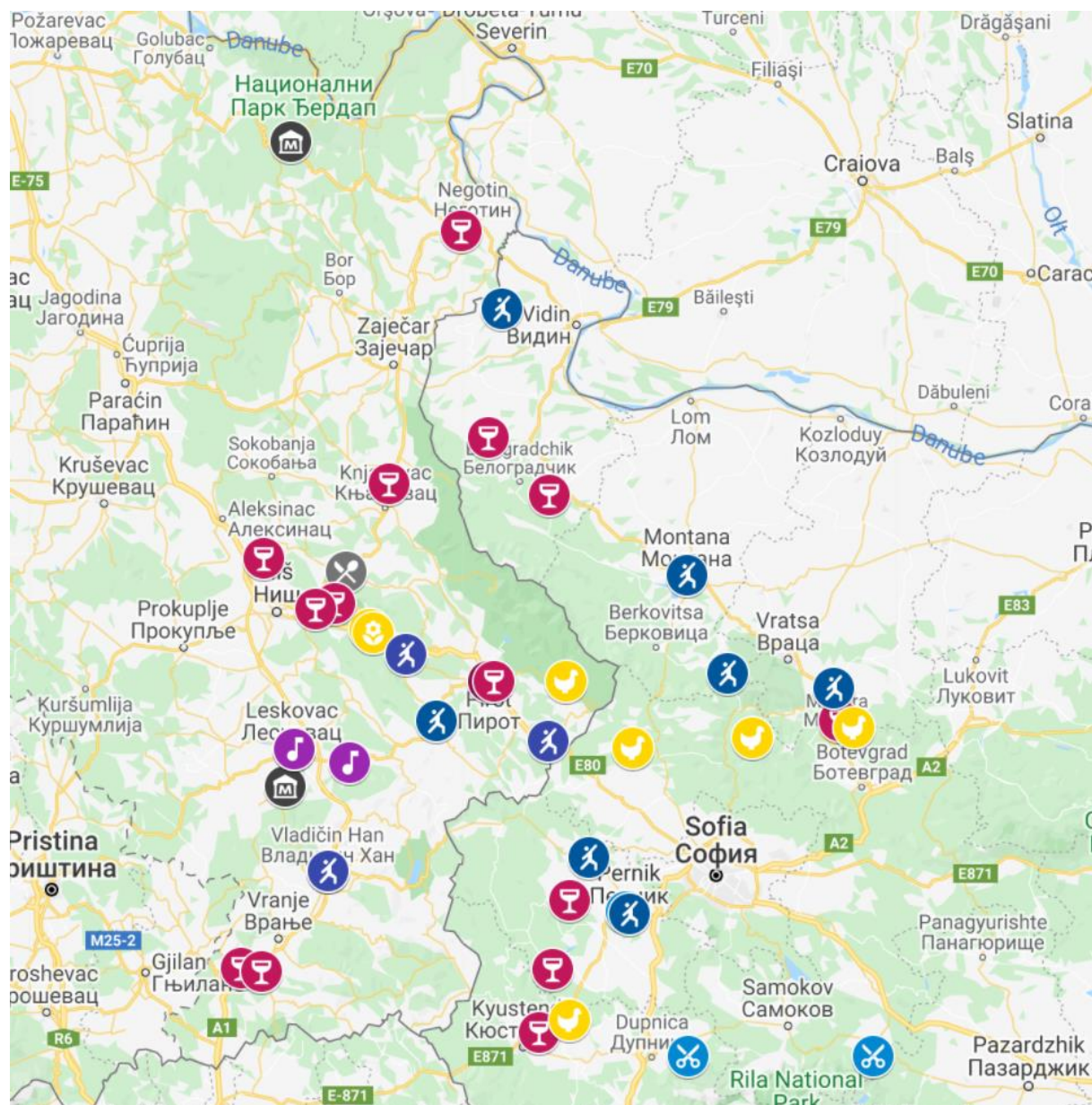
The project is co-funded by the EU through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Serbia Programme.

MAP 2: Cultural heritage sites



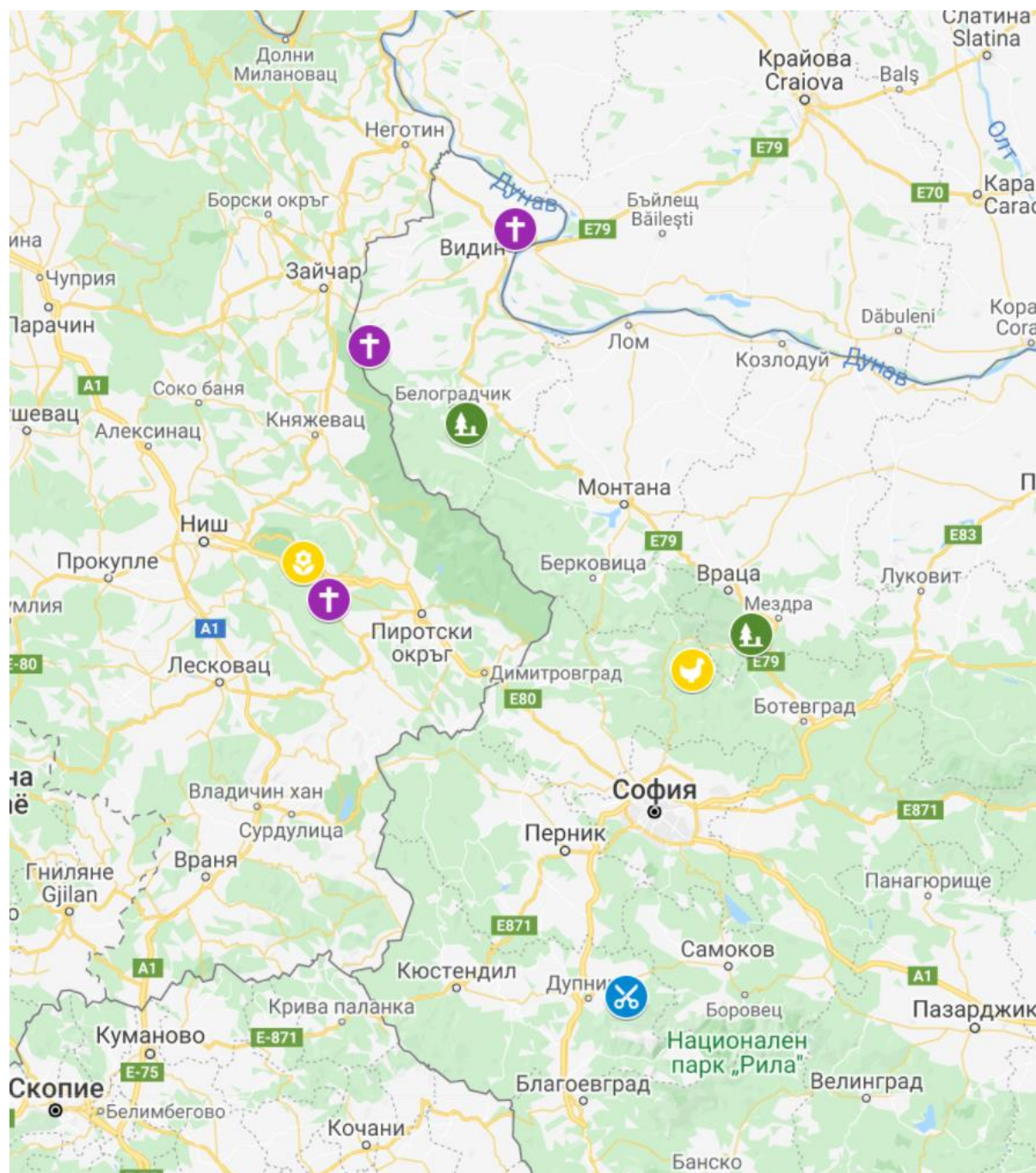
The project is co-funded by the EU through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Serbia Programme.

MAP 3: Intangible cultural heritage (live practices and museums)



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Map 4: Mixed entries



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APPENDIX 2: MAPPING THE UNEXPLORED RESOURCES AND INTANGIBLE HERITAGE IN CBR:

LISTS

Bulgaria

VIDIN district

BH01: St. Paraskeva church, Dolni Lom (Chuprene)

The church of St. Paraskeva is a small medieval religious site located in the North-East part of the Gorni Lom village, dated from 14th-15th century. It is interesting church in terms of its architecture and partially preserved frescos. Around the church building is located the old cemetery of the village. In the area, there are several antient stone crosses.

- S** Extremely valuable architectural monument; recently restored
- W** Not much preserved
- O** Good way; Tourist office in the village; Ecological region; Nature trail to Midzhur peak
- T** No particular working time and visit cannot be scheduled

BH02: Monument of Mourning Soldier (Bulgarian-Serbian War of 1885), Vidin

A monument-ossuary for those killed in the Serbo-Bulgarian War (1885) is located on the square in front of the central railway station of Vidin. A Bulgarian grenadier from the fratricidal war is depicted. The dying soldier lies naked on his elbow; his head bowed over the weapon with which he probably fired his last bullet.

- S** Unique monument on the Bulgarian-Serbian War that considers the two nations brothers
- W** Nationalistic feelings may arise; not socialised as a tourist site
- O** Joint rituals
- T** Among many other perhaps more interesting sites in Vidin

BH03: Borovitsa Rocks & Borovitsa Winery (Belogradchik)

Borov Kamak (also known as "Pine Stone", "Borovitsa Rock", "Borovitsa Stone") is a rock phenomenon located near the village of Borovitsa, Northwest Bulgaria, 113 m high. The village is not far from Belogradchik (11 km), which is famous for the beautiful rock formations that surround the town. Indeed, Borov Kamak is part of this formation but is a little further apart from the leading group of rocks.

In the Borovitsa wine cellar, they make small series of superb white and red wines. Borovitsa winery produces about 50 000 bottles per year, and around 90% is exported.

- S** Accessible rock phenomenon; perhaps used for a shrine; good winery nearby;
- W** In the shade of Belogradchik Rocks and Castle
- O** Less developed, no limits

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T In competition with Belogradchik rocks

BH04: Venetsa Cave, Oreshets (Dimovo)

Venetsa is among the most unique and beautiful caves in Bulgaria. It is declared a natural monument because of its stunning colourful stone formations and ice crystals, resembling flowers, figures and animals. Destroyed once in the past, in 2014 was started a project for developing of the cave. At the end of spring 2015, the cave was officially open for visitors. There have been built 400 meters road, parking and shelter to the entrance. Inside the cave was created a walkway, railings and was wired for electricity. Artistic lighting was built, and it further strengthened the impact and beauty of the colourful formations.

S Interesting and challenging cave; recently open for visitors

W Small capacity

O Less developed, no limits

T In competition with Magura cave

BH05: Salon of Naive and intuitive art at the Art Gallery of Belogradchik (Belogradchil)

The salon of Naive and intuitive art in Belogradchik is a unique project in Bulgaria. It opened in 2019 and is situated in the Belogradchil Art Gallery. The collection unites more than 200 works. The exposition represents both the Bulgarian naive art scene and authors from Serbia, Romania, Croatia, Germany, France, Argentina, Belgium, Finland, Italy, Greece, Russia, Estonia, Poland, Cuba, Indonesia, Haiti, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, Denmark, Slovakia and Georgia. Naive and intuitive art is a living, active phenomenon in the global art culture today. It is also called “art of the holy heart”, “art of instinct”, “untreated”, “modern non-primitivism”, “free of canons”. These definitions emphasize his emotionality and spontaneity. Nowadays, when naivety in life is so rare, the naive and intuitive art of painting occupies a special place. (Source: naiveart.eu)

S Rich valuable collection, rare for the Balkans

W Too specific interest

O Community of artists and audiences worldwide

T Specific auditory

BH06: St. Trinity Monastery of Rakovitsa and Chernoglav Peak (Kula)

The Holy Trinity Monastery is located under the peak Chernoglav between Rakovitza and Kireevo, almost on the Bulgarian-Serbian border. The monastery is a complex of two churches, residential and commercial buildings. The old church built in X-XI century is cross-type. In 1825 the church was painted by the artists Kanyu Zahariev and Dosyu Koev from Tryavna. In 1979 the valuable frescoes were restored.

Chernoglav Peak (858.0 m) is located on the border between Bulgaria and Serbia. Apart from beautiful nature, this peak grabs the attention with an interesting legend related to its name's origin.

S Beautiful medieval church, recently restored; nearby villages are like open-air museums

W No restaurants nearby

O Pilgrimage tourism; combination of religious heritage and natural site; close to a border checkpoint

The project is co-funded by the EU through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Serbia Programme.



T -

BH07: Madona Inn in Falkovets, Yanyovets village (Dimovo)

MADONA Inn is situated in Falkovets village, 14 kilometres from the town of Belogradchik. It is the place where the natural phenomenon Belogradchik rocks starts from. The most valuable thing is the restaurant where the visitors can enjoy unique Torlak specialities and local wines and brandies. Most of the dishes of Torlak cuisine are light and lean and correctly describe the daily life of Torlak, full of work and little time to prepare food with a minimum of products. As shepherds of large flocks of sheep and goats, the main ingredient in many dishes is understandably milk. The greens from the surrounding forests and meadows are also used.

- S** The only place that serves Torlaks dishes; attractions for all tourists; close to tourist sites; a hotel
- W** Not cheap
- O** Culinary tourism; hotel; nature trails; start point to many attractions
- T** Belogradchik restaurants and hotel compete it and tourists might have no motivation to visit is particularly

BH08: St. Trinity Church of Kapitanovtsi and Festival 'Danube and Tomok Link Us' (Vidin)

The Holy Trinity Church is located in the Vidin village of Kapitanovtsi. It is the second-largest one in the district after Vidin Cathedral. Construction began in 1884 and was completed in 5 years. It is believed to have been built in the Greek Church's likeness in the town of Calafat. However, it looks peculiar and unusual in this region. The Debar painter Krasto Yankov painted the church; inscriptions are in Romanian Cyrillic.

The Folklore Festival "Danube and Timok Connects Us" brings together folklore groups and individual performers from Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria. The program usually begins with the consecration of water in St. Trinity church in the presence of the mayor of the village and guests.

- S** Unusual church; Folklore festival
- W** Perhaps predominantly Wallachs; Festival just once a year
- O** Very close to Vidin for hotels and restaurants; Ethnic tourist site; Festival tourism
- T** Villages in Vidin municipality are not well prepared for tourist flows



VRATSA district

BP01: St. Elijah Monastery of Strupets (Roman)

The Holy Prophet Elijah Monastery of Strupets (or Tarzhishte [marketplace]) is an Old Calendar monastery located 4.5 km west of the village Strupets. The monastery is known by the alternative name “marketplace” because a market took place nearby in the Middle Ages. It is thought that the monastery was founded during the 14th century. Church’s frescoes date from the 16th century. The celebration in honour of the church is held every year on July 20. (Source: bulgariatravel.org)

- S** Old-Calendar monastery; the church is valuable and recently restored
- W** Strictly pilgrimage stays
- O** Rocks phenomena in the area
- T** Extremely poor area



BP02: St. Rock phenomenon Bozhiya most, Kadin vir & Rock labyrinth Peshketo (Vratsa)

Near Lilyache, in the Chiren-Lilyache karst region in north-western Bulgaria, three natural phenomena located. Bozhiya most [God’s bridge] consists of substantial stone arches and thick and powerful columns, forming vast halls into which sunlight enters. It is about 20 meters high and about 25 meters wide. In the area, Kadin vir [pool] are the remains of a large Thracian sanctuary dedicated to the god Silvan – god of forests and wildlife. Rock labyrinth Peshketo occupies an area of 2 acres. It is a tangle of rock formations, bridges, holes, shaped passages and small caves.

- S** Picturesque rock phenomena; natural trails; fire place; a small castle remains nearby; no seasonality
- W** The entrance of the rock labyrinth Peshketo is difficult to be found, no signs
- O** Close to the rock phenomena near Mezdra
- T** Many rocks phenomena to compete in the area

BP03: Tipchenitsa Winery (Mezdra)

Tipchenitza Winery is a new winery, which is located in the picturesque village of Tipchenitsa – in the hilly Northwest of Bulgaria. The winery is specialized in the production of small series of high-quality boutique wines. The temperate climate and the specific terroir there help us create elegant wines, famous for their crisp and fruity aromas. The grapes are grown biologically in our own vineyards – in the hills next to the village, just a few kilometers away from the winery. The vineyards open up a magnificent view of the Vrachanski Balkan Nature Park and the countryside around Tipchenitsa. (Source: tipchenitza.bg)

- S** Boutique wines, Vrachanska temenuga (Misket)
- W** Only on demand
- O** Close to the highway (E83, Hemus)

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- T** No other similar sites in the area

BP04: Galabarnika caves and the rock Chervenitsa, Kunino (Roman)

Chervenitsa is a monolithic rock block, rising more than 150 m above the river terrace of the Iskar River near Kunino. The site is located at the Karlukovo Gorge entrance, one of the most beautiful karst areas in Bulgaria, at 300 m above sea level. It is built of Maastricht limestone - i.e., limestone deposited at the Upper Cretaceous end about 70 million years ago.

Galabarnika Cave has an area of 3.5 hectares. The total length of the cave is 159 m, depth -29 m. The cave is developed in a northeasterly direction - through a narrow chimney with a depth of about 4 m begins the descent through three interlocking halls, lined with white and rusty red limestone draperies. There are reddish stalactites and a pond in the lowest gallery, and by the shore of a lake, there is a vast stalactite.

- S** Extreme unique rock phenomena
- W** No marked roads
- O** Close to the railway station of Kunino
- T** Only for professionals

BP05: Belite skali nature trail & St. George medieval basilica, Lyutibrod (Mezdra)

Nature trail "Belite skali" [white rocks] connects the most attractive tourist places in the village of Lyutibrod. It starts at the bridge of Iska River and rock phenomena Ritlite, passes through the railway route Sofia – Mezdra, by the historical place "Rashov dol", remains of a medieval church from the XII-XIV century, an early Christian basilica from the 5th century and the ancient settlement "Koriten grad".

One of the churches – "St. George ", is better preserved and declared a cultural monument. During its centuries-long existence, it has undergone many partial destructions and repairs.

- S** Interesting nature trail, not difficult
- W** A bit nationalist (it is connected with Hristo Botev; it is not offensive but still, a banner 'Welcome, Botev's hikers' stays); the basilic is open on demand
- O** Close to a main road and railway, Mezdra
- T** Being located in a natural park limits its development

BP06: Chuklite Rocks, Kameno pole (Mezdra)

The natural landmark Chuklite is a bizarre rock formation between the villages of Kameno Pole and Bresten. The canyon is not visible in the flat field in the distance, but from its edge, a 90-meter precipice is revealed, and the slopes are covered with vegetation. The southern slope is a vertical rock plumb, while the northern is more sloping and on it are formed rock landmarks. Their height varies from ten to over 35 m, and the thickness at the base of individual rock columns or cones is in range of 5-6 to 10 m.

- S** Fascinating rock phenomenon
- W** Only pedestrian access
- O** Good for drone shooting; many caves and rock phenomena in the area
- T** Extremely poor area; in autumn and winter might looks quite depressing

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BP07: Megalithic Sanctuary Peshtta, Oslen Krivodol (Mezdra)

Peshtta is a megalithic complex, probably from 13,000 BC, still poorly studied. It is located near the village of Oslen Krivodol in the valley of a small river. The pedestrian road is marked and is about 1.5 km long. It passes through 2 sacred places – a small megalith and a meal to two-centuries-old oaks. The Pestta complex itself is relatively hidden; it has many different sizes and decoration stones covered with moss. The centre is a rock shed with evidence of human presence.

- S** Nature trail combining beautiful nature and a culture site; the village is well-kept
- W** Needs guide, otherwise is not reprehensible
- O** Wide space good for camps. Although it is protected, a zone could be designated.
- T** No hospitality facilities

BP08: Festival of medieval traditions, life and culture, Mezdra

The festival of medieval traditions, life and culture, is held in the summer months in the Archaeological Complex “Kaleto” in the town of Mezdra and presents the life, way of life and cuisine of the population of our lands from past centuries. The festival organisers are the Municipality of Mezdra, the Archaeological Complex “Kaleto” and the Association for Restoration and Preservation of Bulgarian Traditions “Avitohol”. It is attended by dozens of individual recreationists and groups for historical reconstructions, which recreate life in the fortress “Kaleto” in late antiquity, early and late Middle Ages.

- S** Unusual festival with variety of experiences; might be visited also in other days
- W** -
- O** Several hotels in Mezdra, close to highway and railway
- T** Project funds will finish and festival future is uncertain

MONTANA district

M01: Sopovo valley on Botunya river (Varshets)

In the area of Sopovo, the river Botunya has formed a narrow canyon with interesting, bizarre oval rock shapes – abrasive wells. According to geologists, such formations in the rocks are formed during high water underwater and small stones.

- S** Curious place on the road Varshets – Montana
- W** Not well socialised
- O** Good for photographers
- T** No visitors' facilities; mass tourism might damage the site



M02: Submerged church of former village of Zhivovtsi

Zhivovtsi is the name of a former village in the Montana region, evicted in the 1980s for the construction of the Ogosta Dam and the village of Kalimanitsa. It is located under the waters of the dam and at a lower water level some remains appear such as an old fountain or tombstones. Half-destroyed above or next to the waters rises the former church of the village “Holy Ascension”. It was built in 1858 by

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master Lilo, who also worked in the village of Kamenna Riksa and the Lopushan Monastery. It had a rich mural decoration of which a small fragment is currently preserved.

- S** Unique place nearby Montana
- W** Too specialised
- O** Interesting for photographers and alternative urbex tourist
- T** Ogosta Dam might damage it

M03: Festival of wind bands 'Diko Iliev', Montana

The celebrations of the brass bands "Diko Iliev" are held in three festival evenings in the spring of each even year in Montana. In the last ten years, there has been international participation. They include brass bands and cheerleaders, and accompanying events are organized. The festivities are not competitive; the performances are outdoors and are open to the public. The festival is dedicated to one of the most famous composers of music for brass bands in Bulgaria. It is probably the most significant event in the genre in the country.

- S** The biggest event for wind bands in Bulgaria; participants from abroad; supplementary events
- W** Because it is a free public event could be too crowded; not easy to book a stay
- O** It is not only for a specific public but for music and festivals lovers; suitable for kids
- T** Compete with other similar events, although it is the biggest

M04: Waterfall Lanzhin skok & Kopren peak (Georgi Damyanovo)

The waterfall Lanzhin skok (height 8 m) is located on the Militsa River, in the Western Stara Planina, near the village of Kopilovtsi. It is one of the Kopren's waterfalls which includes two more – Durshin skok and Water skok. The waterfalls are located in different places, and their height is between 5 and 10 meters. Kopren Peak is located in the western part of the Stara Planina mountain range of Stara Planina and is 1964 m high. It is located on the land of the village of Kopilovtsi on the border between Bulgaria and Serbia. (Sources: opoznai.bg; bg.wikipedia.org)

- S** Nature trails, not difficult pedestrian routes; not industrial pollution; good for photographers
- W** Seasonality
- O** Suitable for cross-border events
- T** Mass tourism might influence the site

M05: Haiduk waterfalls and Kom peak area (Berkovitsa)

Kom peak is 2015.8 meters high. The most impressive view is to the north where Berkovitsa, Montana, and Ogosta dam can be seen. Kom peak is the start point of march Kom-Emine passing through the whole length of the Bulgarian part of Stara Planina.

Haidushki [haiduk] waterfalls are located in the valley of Golyama Reka where the rivers Tsenkova, Slivashka and Sredna Bara meet. The sky is almost invisible, and the water is icy, even in summer.

- S** Nature trails, not difficult pedestrian routes; not industrial pollution; good for photographers
- W** Seasonality
- O** Suitable for cross-border events; good for kids

- T** Mass interest might transform the site into a mass tourist resort

M06: GOATMILK festival, Gorna Bela rechka (Vashets)

GOATMILK is an independent, non-commercial cultural festival held every year in the village of Gorna Bela Rechka. The festival is organized by the New Culture Foundation, an independent private, non-governmental organization founded in 2003 in Sofia. GOATMILK festival gathers artists, scholars, journalists from various countries to revive the village. And the village on its part once a year becomes a stage for performances, lectures, artistic events, etc.

- S** Unique festival for alternative artists and events
- W** No hotels
- O** Many initiatives are in English, so it is suitable for foreigners
- T** Mass tourism would lead to commercialisation of the festival

SOFIA district

CO01a–c: Religious heritage in Godech spiritual district

- CO01a: St. Peter church and 2 obrotsi (holly places), Berende (Dragoman)

The Church of St Peter is a small medieval Bulgarian Orthodox church located in the village of Berende in Dragoman Municipality. Most likely constructed and decorated in the 14th century (based on stylistic and architectural similarities to other works of that period), the Church of St Peter features simple stone architecture but contains several remarkable interior frescoes. (Source: wikipedia.com)

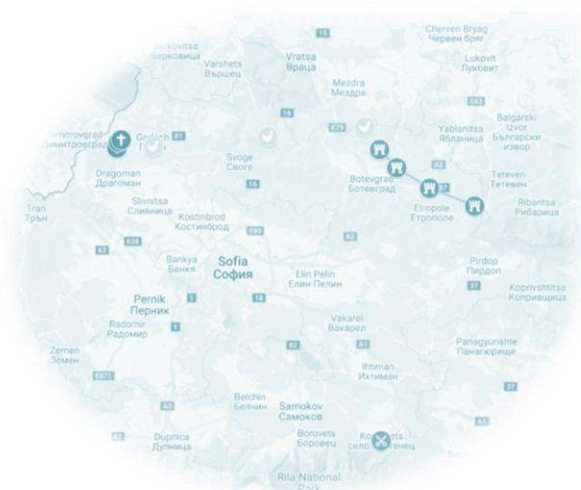
- CO01b: Cheparlitsi Monastery (Dragoman)

The Monastery "St. Petka" is located on the right bank of the river Nishava, 2 km east of the village of Cheperlitsi. When the monastery was initially built, the exact date is unknown, but this place is honoured by the locals as sacred from many years. The temple was built on the site of an early Christian sanctuary-consecration, in the foundations of two Byzantine tombstones dating from the VI to VII century. It was return to life in early 20th century after some miracles, according to the legend.

- CO01c: Razboishki monastery

Razboishki monastery "Vavedenie Bogorodichno" is situated near the village of Razboishte in Godech municipality, Sofia region. It is situated in the defile of Nishava river in the Berkovitsa part of Stara Planina mountain. The residential buildings surrounded from four sides the yard was constructed on the right shore of the river on a sunny and bare terrain (1841). The church "Vavedenie Bogorodichno" ("The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary ") is an archaeological monument of culture with small one nave, one apse construction. To it leads a small wooden bridge over the river.

- S** Valuable religious heritage sites within beautiful nature (mountain, Nishava river)
- W** No good road; St. Peter's church only on foot
- O** Interesting for pilgrimages (also on the patron days) and for common tourists; very close to the checkpoint



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T Mass tourism would change the environment

CO02: Traditional knife-making, Kostenets village (Kostenets)

In the past, the population of Kostenets was mainly engaged in iron mining. Forty types of knives were made in the village, and it is believed that today, in Kostenets, there are 40 knife-makers. Every year, on January 18, St. Athanasius Day, after the church's launch, the knife makers organize a celebration in honour of their profession's patron saint.

- S** Adds value to developed mountain and SPA tourism in the very village; living practice
- W** Mainly organised for purchasing but not for participating
- O** Many events could be organised for tourists' group; its potential is underestimated
- T** -

CO03a–d: Fortresses of Stara Planina

- CO03a: Bozhenishki urvich fortress

Bozhenishki Urvich is a medieval stone fortification. The fortress was built on the northern slope of Lakavishki hill at 750 m above sea level, 3 km south of Bozhenitsa and 20 km from Botevgrad. Since prehistoric times, the place has been inhabited, but the first fortifications date from the V-VI century as a unit of the early Byzantine defence system. Today the fortress walls have been partially restored, and most of the fortification remains undiscovered.

- CO03b: Borovets Fortress

The fortress is located on the rocky peak "Golyam Borovets" about 4 km north of the village of Razliv in a straight line. It is located on the ridge of the hill with an altitude of 847.88 m. The elevation of the terrain makes it difficult to access on all sides and provides its natural protection. The hill dominates the surrounding area and provides good visibility to the Botevgrad field, and the Etropole has a direct visual connection in all directions with several neighbouring fortresses.

- CO03c: Ostroma fortress

Thracian, late antique and medieval fortress "Ostroma" is located on the eponymous peak, 5.2 km southwest in a straight line from the centre of the village of Osikovitsa. On the peak, "Ostroma", rising south of Osikovitsa is "Kalet" – a fortress built in late antiquity (V-VI c.).

- CO03d: Cherti grad fortress

It is located 1284 meters above sea level in the western part of Central Stara Planina on a characteristic "outgrowth" of the watershed ridge separating the Stara Reka and Cherni Vit river basins. The fortress was separated from the ridge by a narrow isthmus and a wall. It remains are up to 2.5 m high. On the other sides, rocks up to 100 m high descend to the Cherni Vit River valley.

- S** The group represents medieval fortification system of Stara Planina; all fortresses are on beautiful places with great panoramic view.
- W** Remains might be disappointing, Ostroma particularly is not visible.
- O** LARP games; students march
- T** Fragile remains might be destroyed with no supervision

CO04: Ambrosia Farm, Elov dol (Botevgrad)

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“Ambrosia” is a small permaculture (modeled on nature) farm, raising different species of grazing animals (pastures) at the foot of the forgotten virgin lands of the Balkan Mountains in the area of Elov dol and Lipnitsa. The farm is located on rich meadows with hundreds of species of wild fruits, mushrooms, grasses and herbs, surrounded mainly by long oak forests. All the time they grazed chickens, hens, pigs, bees, quails, geese, rabbits and children.

CO05: Chemernik Ecofarm & Pod kamiko waterfall, Godech & Gara Bov

Chemernik Organic Farm is established in one of the most picturesque areas of Stara Planina – high above the Iskar Gorge. This region was preserved exceptionally clear, excellent for mountain tourism and allows farmers to grow organic livestock.

Pod Kamiko waterfall is located in the Iskar Gorge, Western Stara Planina. Its height is 40 m. In 2012, a beautiful and picturesque nature trail was built to the waterfall. It follows the rocky valley of the Bovska River.

CO06: Mogila dairy, Godech

Mogila dairy was established in 1996. It works entirely with milk purchased from the region, without using powdered milk. Here the cows and sheep graze fragrant herbs on the meadows and are entirely on pasture, and their milk has irreplaceable qualities.

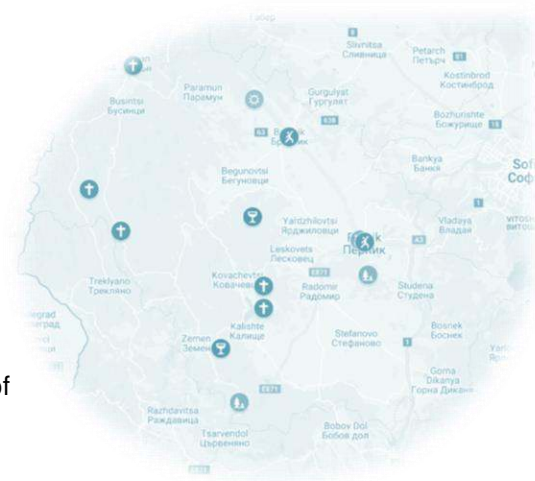
- S** Organic farming in the mountain
- W** Seasonality
- O** Organic food and ecological experience
- T** Mass tourism will change the environment and the nature of the production

PERNIK district

PK01: Mining Museum, Pernik

Pernik is a village with a thousand-year history. Still, the history of modern Pernik as Bulgaria's industrial heart begins when in 1891 the first underground mine “Old Mines” was opened. The mine operated until 1966. In the early 1980s, a group of Pernik miners visited the Wieliczka Salt Mine in Poland, an underground museum. Thus, the idea to have such a museum in Pernik was born. The museum opened in 1986 and is currently the only one on the Balkan Peninsula and one of the few in Europe.

- S** Unique museum on the Balkans; completely socialised
- W** Underground
- O** Good for kids
- T** -



PK02: St. John the Baptist (Yoan Letni) church, Potsarnentsi (Radomir)

The small medieval church with the patron St. John the Baptist (Summer) is located on the former land of the former village of Pchelintsi that was flooded by the waters of Pchelina dam. The church was built

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on imposing rocks on the southern shore of the dam (in the past it was called Lobosh).

- S** Picturesque views; the church is also valuable
- W** No public transport; crowded in weekends
- O** Muse for photographers, also with drone
- T** No hospitality facilities

PK03: Chokilovo swamp, Baykalsko (Radomir)

Choklyovo swamp is an exceptional natural resource, according to official data, it was the wealthiest peat deposit in the Balkans. The healing properties of the lake have been known since ancient times. Probably that is the reason there was a Thracian, and then a Roman settlement. The area is a protected area, and industrial production here is subject to any permits, so no one has undertaken to resume it.

- S** Interesting natural site
- W** Socialised in the past, today is not accessible at all
- O** Good for kids (if restored, might be combined with Dragoman swamp)
- T** No hospitality facilities

PK04: Ostritsa natural park (Pernik & Radomir)

Ostritsa is a maintained reserve to protect a natural habitat of valuable plant specimens. It is located in the Golo Bardo mountain, in the lands of Pernik Radomir and Kravev dol. It is one of the oldest protected areas in Bulgaria.

- S** Interesting natural site
- W** Seasonality; no public transport
- O** For all types of tourists with diverse zones
- T** Climate and environment changes

PK05: Megalithic shrine-well, Garlo (Tran)

The underground shrine-well was discovered during excavations in 1972. Scientists suggest that this is the oldest open temple in our lands and dates back to the Thracians' time. Immediately above the temple was a sanctuary. Today the rock massif and the terrain of the sanctuary are covered by a young forest. The construction of the megalithic facility and the entire cult complex near the village of Garlo is an absolute mystery for Bulgarian archaeology.

- S** Extreme archaeological site
- W** Not easily accessible, only pedestrian route
- O** Suitable for alternative tourism
- T** No T&H facilities at all

PK06: Surva traditional festival, Pernik municipality

PK07: Surova traditional festival, Breznik municipality

The ritual disguise on the Bulgarian lands comes from ancient times and is alive to this day. A special

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place among the traditional masquerade games is occupied by the holiday Surova in Central Western Bulgaria. It is performed every year on January 13 and 14 - the national New Year (St. Basil's Day in the old calendar style). The central core in it is the masquerade ritual, through which a positive transition from the old to the new year occurs. That festival is not the annual international festival in Pernik in the end of January. It is a UNESCO masterpiece (ICH list of Humanity).

- S** Exciting folk feast; traditional masks and costumes
- W** No public transport
- O** Suitable for alternative tourism
- T** Mass tourism would lead to commercialisation of the event

PK08a-d: St. Petka in Tran region

PK08a: St. Petka rock chapel, Tran

The rock chapel "St. Petka" (also known as the Cave of St. Petka) is a Christianized prehistoric rock-cut sanctuary, acting as a rock chapel. The holy place is located above the Barintsi neighbourhood in the town of Trun. Water flows from the ceiling of the cave, which, according to folklore, is a sacred water source that is healing.

PK08b: Levorechki Monastery

The Levorechki Monastery "Holy 40 Martyrs" is located in the Elovishka Mountain, about a kilometre north of Leva Reka. The monastery was founded in the XV-XVI century, but like most of the churches and monasteries in these lands, underwent significant changes in the XIX century. The original monastery church was probably destroyed in the Middle Ages, and later around 1850 was rebuilt.

PK08c: St. Petka church, Penkyovtsi Monastery

Penkovo Monastery "St. Petka" is located about 100 meters west of the road to Trun. The old (eastern) part of the church, built probably in the late Middle Ages (XVI-XVII century), is a small, single-nave, single-apse, pseudo-triconch building, built of quarry stone with mortar solder. Its walls were painted entirely inside. During the Revival, the church was painted with frescoes, which occupy an independent Bulgarian monumental fresco place.

PK08d: St. Petka church (Radibosh village)

The late medieval church "St. Paraskeva" (St. Petka) is located not far, southeast of the centre of the village of Radibosh. The year of construction of the temple is unknown, but based on the architectural data and stylistic features of the frescoes inside it, it is dated to the end of the XVI century at the latest. Evidence of the antiquity of the church is preserved over the years and discovered some time ago.

- S** Valuable chain of old churches in a beautiful area
- W** Not easily by public transport
- O** Especially suitable for pilgrims, for common tourist as well
- T** Might be destroyed with no supervision

PK9a, b – KH01: Farming in Old Calendar monasteries

PK9a: Giginski monastery Inn (Breznik)

The Old Calendar monastery "Sts Kozma and Damyan" is located in the mountains of Montenegro in an area with excellent fresh air. It is famous for its healing mineral water, which helps with vision problems - a spring with a separate chapel and fountains has been built. The most valuable building in



the monastery is the old church from 1814. One can also see the 200-year-old adobe building of the monastic wing. The Giginti Monastery preserves a part of the relics of one of its patrons - Saint Cosmas. It has its own farming household and offer dairy products.

PK9b: Zhablyano monastery (Zemen)

The Zhablyano Monastery "St. John the Baptist" is located below Kurilovo Peak, in the Konyavska Mountain and only 2 km south of the village of Zhablyano in the Virova Gradina area. The monastery is a complex of three-nave, three-apse and one-domed church (1884), residential and farm buildings. The monks treat us with homemade cow's cheese and milk and sourdough bread.

KH01: Kopilovtsi monastery (Kyustendil)

Kopilovtsi Monastery, "Holy Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin", is a new monastery located near Kopilovtsi, Kyustendil municipality. The monastery was founded in 2003. The complex is built on purchased land for ten years, with funds derived from agriculture. It consists of a three-nave church and the adjacent residential and farm buildings.

- S** Valuable religious places and organic food
- W** Might be too religious
- O** Especially suitable for pilgrims, for common tourist as well
- T** Mass tourism would lead to commercialisation

KYUSTENDIL district

KH02: Goritsa waterfall and 'valyavitsi' (traditional carpets washing), Ovcharts (Sapareva banya)

Ovcharchenski Goritsa Waterfall is a waterfall on the river Goritsa, Bulgaria. It is located at the northern foot of Rila, near the village of Ovcharts and the town of Sapareva Banya.

In the village, there are also two traditional tepavitsa / rollers, in which the locals have been using the power of clean running water for washing for a long time. After the construction of the eco-trail, their customers (2019) have increased.

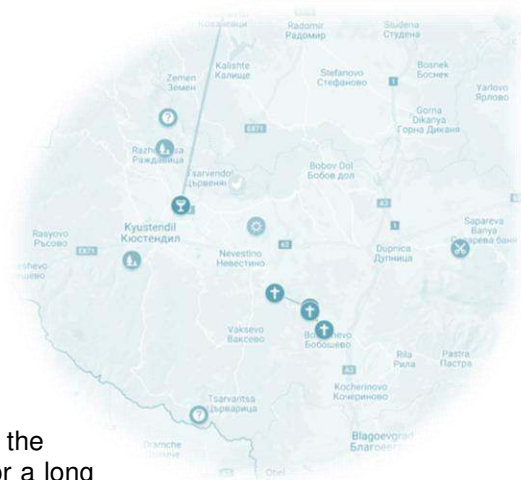
- S** Interesting rare craft; the eco-trail is light
- W** Seasonality
- O** Close to Sapareva banya SPA resort and Panichishte ski resort
- T** Mass tourism would lead to commercialisation of the craft and would deprive it of its functionality

KH03: Bandera ranch & Svezhest dairy farm, Konyavska mountain

Built in the Konyavska Mountain at 1,500 meters above sea level, the Bandera Ranch is home to one of the largest herds of Haflinger horses and a herd of 100 cows Montbeliard breed. The ranch is nestled in a great area and offers an open country bar to spend the night by arrangement with full furniture and cosy interior. In the ranch approach, on the road Sofia-Kyustendil in the area, "Strazhata" is positioned the dairy "Svezhest", which offers the full range of dairy products from the family business of the Kolevi family from the village of Konyavo. (Source: ezdapress.com)

- S** Combination of place to stay in the place where food is produced
- W** Relatively seasonal
- O** Suitable for groups stay, for seminars, student camps, families, etc.

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T -

KH04: Provirkalkata megalithic sanctuary, Lilyach (Nevestino)

About 1 km from the village in the area Manastirishte, accessible by an old dirt road, passing along the dam wall and crossing a hill forested with pine forest, is the village church "St. George". The building of the Christian church is built on an ancient megalithic sanctuary marked with sacrificial pits. The site is large-scale, with parts of it falling underground on the surrounding terrain. The site is a megalithic complex, including several natural rock arches, reworked in ancient times.

S Valuable megalithic site

W No hotels

O Suitable for pilgrimages, students, kids, for alternative tourism as well

T -

KH05: Centuries-old redwoods, Bogoslov (Kyustendil)

The redwoods were imported to Bulgaria in 1890. Forester Yordan Mitrev planted the three redwoods in the Yuchbunar area near the village of Bogoslov after a sailor friend brought them from North America.

S Impressing natural pattern

W Not authentic, no public transport

O Very close to Kyustendil; great for kids

T -

KH06a-d: Orthodox Heritage on Struma River

KH06a: St. Trinity church, Pastuh (Nevestino)

It is a one-nave and one-apse triconch church, with a semi-cylindrical vault, dug on two steps into the ground. Like most small churches from the late Middle Ages in Western Bulgaria, its western facade has an arched niche which is the only decorative element on the outside. It is built of crushed stone on mortar sorder, and the antis and the entrance niche are made of travertine. According to its architecture and painting, the church can be related to the XVI-XVII century. (Source: wikipedia.com)

KH06b: St. Petka church, Vukovo (Boboshevo)

It is one nave and one apse church without narthex with wall piers which form a swallow arc on the western facade. The vault is semi-cylindrical. The semi-round apse has a small narrow window. It was built of stones and white plaster. The whole interior as well as the western external wall are painted. The frescoes in the church are relatively well preserved and are an important source for the development of the late medieval painting in Bulgaria and the Balkans. The church was constructed in the 16th century. (Source: wikipedia.com)

KH06c: St. Nicolas church, Vukovo (Boboshevo)

The Church of St Nicholas is a late Medieval Bulgarian church near the village of Vukovo, Kyustendil Province. It is situated at 2 km to the south of Vukovo, in a deep and hardly accessed dingle. It is a small one nave and one apse church without narthex and with a shallow arc on the western facade. The whole interior and the arc on the western facade are painted but only fragments of the frescoes have remained. The church was constructed and painted in the 16th century. (Source: wikipedia.com)

The project is co-funded by the EU through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Serbia Programme.



KH06d: St. Theodor church

Today the church "St. Nicholas" in Vukovo is abandoned, but in the spring of 2009 a road was laid to it so that it is accessible to visitors. The entire interior was painted, as well as the arch on the west wall. The mural decoration dates back to the 16th century, but only partial fragments remain. (Source: wikipedia.com)

- S** Valuable religious heritage sites; always open
- W** -
- O** Close to the main road Kyustendil-Boboshevo, interesting as a group but also separately; might be combined with other Boboshevo churches and Skrino
- T** Might be destroyed with no supervision

KH07: Shegava canyon

Shegava has a beautiful canyon-like valley, with a depth of more than 200 m. On the steep and vertical slopes are sculpted bizarre rock formations with a height of more than 100 m - pyramids, ridges, vertical walls, needles. Remarkable for their beauty are the Shegavski ritli, the rock formations "Samotnico", "Kamilite", "Turtle", etc.

- S** Completely unexplored and not socialised
- W** Not socialised
- O** Virgin nature site for visitors with particular interests and skills
- T** No T&H facilities at all

Serbia

Niš district

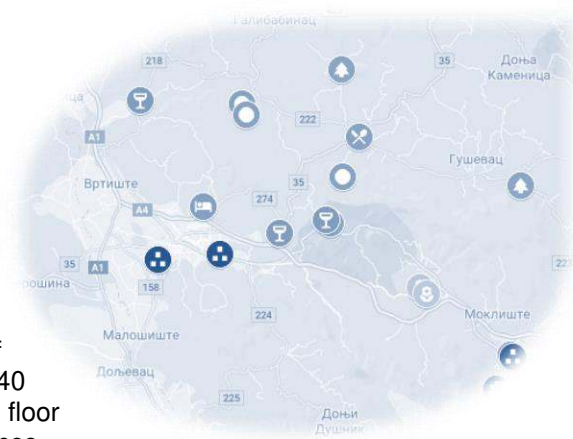
NI01: Archaeological site Medijana

Mediana is a luxurious suburb of the ancient city of Naissus (today's Niš), which was built at the end of the 3rd and the beginning of the 4th century during the reign of the Roman emperor Constantine the Great and his successors. Today, Mediana is one of the most important archeological parks in Serbia, on an area of 40 hectares. Visitors can also see more than 1000 square meters of floor mosaics, which evoke a part of the luxury of this unique royal residence.

- S** One of most important archaeological sites in Serbia
- W** Too far from other sites in Niš for walking city tour
- O** Completely renovated and covered
- T** Closed last couple of years – very slow renovation

NI02: Brljavski kamen Sićevo

In the village of Sićevo, is a "view from the geography textbook", from the Brljavski kamen lookout, near





the village playground. Brljavski kamen is a hill in Serbia with an altitude of 395 meters above sea level and is part of the Svrljig mountains.

From there, you can see the Sićevačka gorge and the greenish Nišava river, which breaks through between the giant rocks of the Svrljiške mountains and mountain Suva planina. On the opposite, left side of the river Nišava, there is another lookout, on the cliff of the mountain Kusač. The scenes that can be seen are fascinating. In addition to the rocks and the river, below you can see the international road and railway to Sofia, the dam on the Nišava and one of the oldest hydroelectric power plants in Serbia, over a one century old.

- S** Interesting natural site
- W** No restaurants near by
- O** Close to the main regional road Niš – Pirot – Sofia
- T** A stop within a visit in village of Sićevo

NI03: Eco plantation Tamnjanica

The organization is engaged in the production of medicinal herbs, essential oils, fruits, wine and brandy. Also, The HOUSE OF ARTISTS on the property of Gorazd Čuk has become an oasis of creativity for artists from all over the world. They leave a part of themselves creating works of art in the fields of fragrant plants, but they bring new energy from Tamnjanica, energy that "feeds" them in the days of gray and that is why they are always happy to return to this place.

- S** Interesting agricultural/art colony site
- W** No accommodation facilities in the village
- O** Close to the main regional road Niš – Pirot – Sofia
- T** Longer stay of 1-day trip

NI04: Gostionica na vinskom putu Malča (Inn on the wine road Malča)

Just a few kilometers from Nis, along the highway Niš - Sofia, on the road of the Roman emperors, the Cellar Malča from 1903 represents a unique centuries-old synthesis of wine roads that crossed, passed, permeated and finally merged into a fairy tale worth mentioning.

The cellar tells this fairy tale through its unusual combination of tradition and culture of Roman emperors, Serbian rulers and old wine masters.

Lovers of wine and history can experience the "Journey through wine time" in a unique place, visiting four wine houses from four different time epochs and getting to know so many ways of cultivating wine.

- S** On the Road of Roman Emperors
- W** No accommodation facilities – sewerage problem in the village
- O** Good road – connection with highway Niš – Sofia
- T** In a package, also with neighbouring attractions

NI05: Ramonda Serbica Guesthouse

At only 17 km from Nis, away from the city crowds, Konak Ramonda Serbika offers the enjoyment of nature and complete intimacy.

The project is co-funded by the EU through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Serbia Programme.



Ramonda Serbika is located near the art colony "Nadežda Petrović" and near the caves of Mala and Velika Balanica, and has an accommodation capacity of two apartments that are suitable for small groups.

What sets them apart is the possibility of organizing hiking Visegrad - Gradac, walks, fishing, visits to events such as Days of Sage, Days of photographic, literary, art and drama colony, excursions tour of the monastery of St. Petka, the Most Holy Mother of God, tour of caves, but also a visit rural households, wine and cheese tasting, as well as the possibility of buying local products.

- S** Old Serbian rural family house
- W** Not suitable for big groups
- O** Good road – close to regional road Niš – Pirot
- T** In a package, also with neighbouring attractions

NI06: Imunsan apartments

Imunsan apartments are engaged in rural tourism and produce various types of sprouts, wheatgrass juice, barley grass, guard house juice.

The apartments are located 5 km from the city center, in its cleanest part called Vinik, at 500 m above sea level in a completely natural environment... so close to the city and far enough away from city noise and pollution.

We are 10 km away from the airport "Constantine the Great" and getting off the highway separates you ten minutes drive to us.

Clean air, peace, quiet and relief from the search for a parking space are our advantages.

- S** Combination of place to stay in the place where food is produced
- W** In package with other points of interests in Niš
- O** For all types of tourists with diverse zones
- T** For short, 1-day stay

NI07: Izba Jovanović

Izba Jovanović is winery located in the village of Vele Polje, about 20 km north of Niš, in a old family house.

The road to the village is accompanied by unique landscapes - alternating fields, forests, fields and vineyards in a beautiful landscape.

- S** Old Serbian rural family house with winery
- W** Not suitable for big groups, no accommodation nearby
- O** Suitable for alternative wine tourism
- T** Short stay - In a package with neighbouring attractions

NI08: KC Svrljig Abbys Pandiralo

The Pandiralo abyss is located in the village of Periš, a few hundred meters from the main road that has long led to Stara Planina, at the junction of the Nišava and Timok valleys, and the border of two large mountain systems, Stara Planina and Svrljiške mountains.

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- S** Interesting natural site
- W** No accommodation nearby
- O** For all types of tourists with diverse zones
- T** The entrance is difficult to be found, no signs

NI09: Belmužijada event

Economic / tourist event “Belmužijada”, three-day long event in the beginning of August. „Belmužijada” is an economic and tourist event dedicated to Belmuž. Belmuž is a traditional Svrlijig specialty made of young sheep's and cow's cheese and sifted flour, which is served hot. According to some interpretations, belmuž was named after white cheese and because it was more often prepared by husbands, because a strong male hand is needed to constantly turn the mixture in the cauldron.

Belmuž is on the list of intangible cultural heritage of Serbia.

- S** Very unusual event about intangible cultural heritage of Serbia
- W** Because it is a free public event could be too crowded; not easy to book a stay
- O** It is not only for a specific public but for music and festivals lovers; suitable for kids
- T** Three days stay – first week in August

NI10: Niševačka gorge

The Niševac gorge is located in the southeast of Serbia, in the area of the village of Niševac, 6 km from Svrlijig and 36 km from City of Niš.

Niševačka gorge is located within the composite valley of Svrlijski Timok and is an integral part of Svrlijska gorge. The valley is located in the Carpathian-Balkan part of eastern Serbia and as such represents a special landscape unit.

- S** Interesting natural site
- W** No restaurants nearby
- O** For all types of tourists with diverse zones
- T** Suitable for a short walk for visitors to Svrlijig

NI11: Prekonoška cave

The Prekonoška cave is located in the municipality of Svrlijig, above the village of Prekonoga, in a slightly sloping karst plateau, in a place called "Šakrinina strana". Seen in relation to Svrlijig Southeast.

The entrance to the cave is at about 700 meters of absolute height, above the Velika Reka, at about 120 meters above its bottom. According to Jovan Cvijić, the origin of the Prekonoška Cave is related to the evolution of the Prekonoška River. It used to flow in the level of the cave, and only later it sunk its bed by 120 meters. While the Prekonoška river in this higher level separated the Prekonoška cave. Prekonoška Cave, together with the Big and Small Hole, has a total length of about 500 meters, and is part of the cave system built by the Dobra Reka sinkhole.

- S** Interesting and challenging cave; recently open for visitors
- W** Only for professionals
- O** Less developed, no limits

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T Suitable in package with neighbouring caves complex

NI12: Samar cave

The Samar cave complex consists of the Samar cave, Prerasti Samar / Sudvek and the Jezava cave, which is located right next to the Samar cave. This whole area belongs to the protected areas, monuments of nature.

Famous tourist attractions gravitate to the area where the Samar cave complex is located: the swimming pool in the village of Popšica, the monastery of St. Archangel Gabriel in Pirkovac, the canyon of the White River in Labukovo, the Popšička cave, etc.

- S** Interesting and challenging cave;
- W** Small capacity
- O** Less developed
- T** Suitable in package with neighbouring caves complex

NI13: Plantation Tamnjanica

The company, together with its subcontractors, is engaged in organic cultivation and processing of aromatic and medicinal plants (lavender, immortelle, lemon balm, hyssop, chamomile, rose), production of essential oils and products from them, as well as cultivation and processing of fruits and vegetables, especially blueberries, cherries, Bela Palanka orchards, etc. (jams, sweets, syrups, juices, liqueurs, "ajvar", salads, pickles, spreads, "pindur", etc.), as well as beekeeping and production of honey and honey products.

- S** Interesting rare craft and flower production
- W** Seasonality
- O** Accommodation facilities are in progress / under construction
- T** Families targeting for weekend

NI14: Monument park Bujanj

The Bujanj Memorial Park is a memorial complex, built in memory of the executed citizens of Niš and southern Serbia in the Second World War, and is located southwest of Nis, in the Niš municipality of Palilula. The Bujanj Memorial Park was placed under state protection in May 1973 as an authentic place of mass fascist terror. While in April 1979, by the decision of the Assembly of Serbia, the Bujanj Memorial Park was declared a cultural asset of exceptional importance.

- S** Extremely valuable architectural monument
- W** Not much preserved
- O** Suitable for big groups and students, outdoor lectures in amphitheatre
- T** In package with other points of interest in Niš

NI15: Banica Days event

Dani Banice (Days of Banica) is a gastro-tourist event that has been held in Bela Palanka every year since 2005. The name itself refers to a specific type of homemade pie, which is called "Banica" in the

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Bela Palanka and Pirot region, as well as in Bulgaria and Macedonia.

It consists of a competitive and show part in the preparation of homemade pies and traditional specialties. Every year there are more and more participants and visitors. In recent years, a large number of guests from Bulgaria and other countries.

Thematically, the event is divided into three parts, usually held for three days: the second week of August, from Friday to Sunday.

- S** The biggest event in Bela Palanka region
- W** Seasonality, three days in August
- O** It is not only for a specific public but for music and festivals lovers; suitable for kids
- T** Because it is a free public event could be too crowded

NI16: Remezijana

Remezijana is an archeological site located in Bela Palanka. It belongs to the category of cultural monuments of great importance, which was entered in the central register in 1988. The local register is kept by the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments Nis. Remesiana was the seat of the episcopate (the seat of Bishop Nikita) in the 4th century.

The site is located in the inner city area of Bela Palanka, on the route of the ancient road Naissus-Serdica, about 35 km from the first and about 106 km from the second center. The ramparts and the interior of the fortification have been partially explored. The necropolises were identified on the basis of random findings. At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, minor amateur archeological works were performed.

- S** Very easily accessible archaeological site
- W** In package with other points of interests in Bela Palanka
- O** Good way, Tourist office in the town
- T** Not much preserved

NI17: Monastery St. Dimitrije

At the foot of the southeastern part of Suva Planina, about five kilometers south of Bela Palanka, at 450 meters above sea level in the village of Divljane, is the monastery of the Holy Great Martyr Dimitrije. The monastery was built on the ancient road to Skopje and Thessaloniki. The monastery has been demolished and rebuilt several times, and it is assumed that it is almost 1600 years old. The sanctuary on which the monastery was built was revered in the 4th century BC, and apparently it was dedicated to the pagan sun god Mithras.

- S** Very valuable Old-Calendar monastery
- W** Strictly pilgrimage stays
- O** Old oak phenomena in the area
- T** 1-day trip

NI18: Old Oak in Divljana

According to the data of the Tourist Organization of Bela Palanka, the conscious oak in the village of Divljana is the oldest living creature in the Balkans, since it was planted 1,026 years ago. The data that

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that organization has at its disposal show that the incredibly long-lived tree was planted by the subjects of the Macedonian emperor Samuel. Municipality of Bela Palanka will try to get official confirmation from the competent institutions that the wild oak will be the oldest in the Balkans.

- S** Impressive natural heritage
- W** No possibility to preserve
- O** Old Monastery in the neighbourhood
- T** 1-day trip

NI19: Wine cellar Kratina

Family business is the production of grapes and wine. Located in the village of Sićevo, 18 km from the center of Niš, in the most beautiful part of the Sićevo gorge. Excellent geographical position, favorable climate, as well as a huge amount of love for growing vines have resulted in the production of wines of excellent quality. This love was instilled in us by our ancestors who have always been involved in viticulture.

- S** Accessible viewpoint - Brljavski kamen;
- W** Only on demand
- O** Close to the regional road Niš – Pirot
- T** 1-day trip for wine lovers; a stop on the way to Bela Palanka or Pirot

NI20: Wine cellar Živković

Our family business is the production of grapes and wine. We are located in Niš, and our vineyards are located in an area called Dobrič, on the outskirts of the Toplica region, known for its indigenous grape variety, Prokupac.

Excellent geographical position, favorable climate, as well as a huge amount of love for growing vines have resulted in the production of wines of excellent quality.

- S** Easy access as part of city tour in Niš;
- W** Only on demand
- O** Very good quality of wines
- T** Small capacity

BOR district

BO01: Guesthouse Stanisavljevic Negotin

Guesthouse Stanisavljevic in Negotin features a garden, tennis court and terrace. This 2-star property offers room service, babysitting services, shuttle service and a shared kitchen. The reception is open 24 hours a day, while bicycles can be used free of charge. Free WiFi is available throughout the property.

- S** Camping site as well; suitable for an active holiday
- W** Poor road network in the region



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- O** Possibility for creating excursions to wine cellars, religious sites, nature attractions
- T** Lack of tradition in tourist bussiness in the area

BO02: Bukovo Monastery

Bukovo monastery is a late 13th or early 14th century Serbian Orthodox monastery on the slopes of Bratujevac in Negotin, Serbia, founded by Serbian king Stefan Milutin (1282–1321) of the House of Nemanjić. It is surrounded by woods at the hill of Bratujevac. Renovation was made in 1902.

- S** Valuable medleval art, cultural and religious heritage
- W** -
- O** Excellent wine cellar
- T** Not complitely accessible for disabled persons

BO03: Matalj Winery

Matalj vineyards and winery originate from the desire and vision of Mr. Radiša Mladenovic Matalj and his family to produce top-quality wines in the Negotin region. Today Matalj Winery is a family business that is developing with the aim of affirmation of quality wine from Negotin.

This family winery produces cca 75,000 premium wine bottles annually. The cellar is moved into new premises of a far larger capacity in late 2017, at Bukovo just north of Negotin. A large tastings room is open in 2020. The winery is surrounded by a smaller vineyard of autochthone sorts.

- S** Easy access, good road
- W** No accommodation nearby
- O** Very good quality of wines
- T** Short stay only

BO04: Archaeological site Rudna Glava

The early Eneolithic mine Rudna Glava near Majdanpek (5000 BC) is an example of the oldest known copper technology. It was explored 1968-1989. within the project Old Mining and Metallurgy of the Central Balkans, led by Dr. Borislav Jovanović (Archaeological Institute of SANU) and Ilija Janković (Museum of Mining and Metallurgy in Bor). Only three decades after its discovery, Rudna Glava has been accepted as one of the strongholds of European civilization.

- S** Very easily accessible archaeological site
- W** In package with other points of interests in Majdanpek
- O** Good way, Tourist office in the town
- T** Not much preserved

BO05: Permanent exhibition "in the homeland of metal"

The permanent exhibition of the Museum in Majdanpek, "In the homeland of metal, mining through the centuries in Majdanpek and its surroundings", was conveptualised by P. Durić. The museum in Majdanpek was established in 1998 with the independence of the Department of the Museum of Mining and Metallurgy from Bor, opened in Majdanpek in 1984. It started operating on January 1, 1999. The

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museum nurtures the cultural identity of the Municipality of Majdanpek as the European homeland of metal, and at the same time the most archaic customs and beliefs have been preserved on its soil. The mission of the museum is to research, process, preserve and exhibit the material, spiritual and natural values of this area with a special emphasis on archeo-metallurgy and the traditional customs of the Vlachs. The museum nurtures the cultural identity of the Municipality of Majdanpek as the European homeland of metal, and at the same time the most archaic customs and beliefs have been preserved on its soil.

- S** Cultural identity; Tradition; Customs and beliefs of the Vlachs;
- W** Too specific interest;
- O** Can be combined with other tourist attractions;
- T** Very specific interest; Short stay;

BO06: Rajac village – Pivnice

Rajačke pivnice, the world's unique cultural and historical monuments - were erected at the beginning of the 19th century to honor the wine and vines. Rajac pivnice are complexes of wine cellars located about 2 km west of the village of Rajac, at the top of the hill Beli breg. It is a settlement of stone houses in which wines were made and stored, and in some of them it is still done. The complex consists of more than 200 buildings, most of which have wine cellars. They are located around the central square with a fountain. They are built of hewn stone and logs, and are covered with shingles. Whether due to the specific environment, the way in which the warehouse is produced, or the land from which the grapes are harvested, the wines from this area are said to smell best, have healing properties and encourage good thinking and even better singing. The most famous white wines are made from varieties such as Smederevka, Bagrina and White Tamjanika, while red wines are made from Prokupac, Red Burgundac and Gamay.

The old cemetery (XVI-XIX century) is attached to Rajačke pivnice. It is very interesting and worth a visit, because you will find many very old, fantastic and strangely carved stone tombstones - stećak, which are a unique cultural feature of this small village in eastern Serbia.

- S** The world's unique cultural and historical monument are complexes of wine cellars; The old cemetery with fantastic carved stone tombstones – stećak;
- W** Need better promotion; Need better accommodation and a variety of the accommodation;
- O** Rural tourism; Extend offer by connecting villages in the area and making unique viticulture tour;
- T** Mass tourism can affect; Close to Rogljevo village (similar to Rajac);

BO07: Rogljevo village- Pivnice

Rogljevo is a compact vineyard and cattle-breeding village 22 km south of Negotin town. It is located at an average altitude of 120 meters above sea level, on the left side of the Timok valley. According to tradition, Rogljevo is one of the oldest settlements in Krajina (Negotin region). Remains of antiquities can be found in the places Latinsko Groblje (Latin cemetery), Selište and Staro Groblje (the Old cemetery). Significant natural resources for the development of rural tourism in the area of this settlement are favorable climate, rich flora and fauna, forest, and especially "bučine" - inverse beech communities, medicinal plants, mushrooms and forest fruits and excellent conditions for viticulture and wine production. In the immediate vicinity there is a complex of wine cellars - Rogljevske pivnice and picnic area Mokranjske stene. Several viticulture festivities are held in the village, and the most famous one is the Rogljevo harvest.

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- S** The unique cultural and historical monuments;
- W** Need better promotion; No accommodation;
- O** Rural tourism; Extend offer by connecting villages in the area and making unique viticulture tour;
- T** Mass tourism can affect; Close to Rajac village (similar to Rogljevo);

BO08: Lake Bor

At a distance of 17 km from Bor at the foot of the mountain Crni Vrh, mountain watercourses in 1959, were captured by a dam. Nature accepted this human decision as its own. This is how one of the tourist pearls of the Bor municipality was created - Bor Lake. At an altitude of 438 meters, the smooth surface of the lake water of 30 hectares, is a mirror for the picturesque and magnificent beauty of the surrounding area. The crystal-clear lake water gets a dark green color in the summer months and its surface layer reaches a temperature of 25 degrees Celsius, which makes it extremely pleasant for swimming. Finely indented and picturesque coast with beaches and coastline with recreational and walking trails, sports fields and other facilities in addition to recreation provide sports, recreational, excursion and cultural-event activities, and thus make Lake Bor one of the most attractive tourist destinations in this part of Serbia..

Lake Bor is an ideal place for fishing. The clean mountain waters that flow into the lake, as well as regular annual restocking, make it a suitable habitat for a large number of fish species such as carp, bream, catfish, perch, 51andar, grass carp, silver carp, and all types of white fish. Capital catches of certain species are not rare, so this lake is very popular among fishermen. From the accommodation capacities at the disposal of the guests is the hotel "Jezero", Children's resort "Savača" auto-camp, boarding house "Vertigo", private accommodation in houses and rooms located near the lake.

- S** The tourist pearl of Bor; recreational and walking trails; Excursion and cultural-event activities; fishing;
- W** Need better accommodations;
- O** Extraordinary position and good traffic connections; Rural tourism; Great for children;
- T** Transit destination;

BO09: Lazar's cave

At the end of the impressive Lazar's canyon, for over hundreds of thousands of years, a monumental Lazar's cave, 56 meters high, was formed in the limestone hill Pripor. It is 21 km away from Bor, 14 km from Brestovacka Banja, and 3.5 km from the village of Zlot.

The total length of the examined cave channels is more than 10,000 m, while a 900-meter-long trail has been arranged for tourists. The cave space consists of monumental, beautiful halls with sound names: Preston, Block Hall, Concert Hall, Bat Hall, etc. For now, the visible wealth of cave jewelry is presented by, among others: Stogovi, Fontana, Plast, Bison, Imperial Lodge, Conductor, Orchestra...

- S** Natural phenomena; 900m arranged for tourist visits
- W** Seasonality
- O** Various viewpoints in near proximity
- T** Natural sites can get spoiled if there is mass tourism



BO10: Vratnjanske gates

Vratnjanske gates are high stone arches that represent the remains of a former large cave. They are located in the imposing canyon of the river Vratna. They are very rare in the world, and here there are as many as three: Big, Dry and Small gates. The large gate is 45m long, 23m wide and 30m deep. The gate can be reached by a well-kept and marked path that starts from the Vratna monastery.

- S** Rare natural phenomenon; well-kept path leading to it
- W** Not suitable for disabled people
- O** Can be combined with the visit of Vratna monastery
- T** If not properly managed, mass tourism can spoil the nature

BO11: Rajko's Cave

Rajkova cave is a cave in eastern Serbia, 2.5 km north of Majdanpek. The abyssal entrance is at 469 m above sea level, and the spring entrance at 427 m above sea level. With a length of 2304 m of explored corridors, of which the dry channel has 1,174 m, and the river 1,130 m, it is one of the longest caves in Serbia. The cave can be reached by an asphalt road near the shores of Mali Pek and the artificial lake Veliki Zaton. The entire surroundings of the spring of Mali Pek are rich in a mixed forest of beech, maple and oak and represent a unique natural and speleological treasure. The new reconstruction of Rajkova cave connects two horizons, so that visitors to this cave are given the possibility of a circular tour.

- S** One of biggest and most attractive cave in Serbia
- W** A little bit away from main tourist centres
- O** With increasing interests for active and rural tourism, Rajkova's Cave can get more popularity
- T** The cave environment is very fragile. Uncontrolled number of tourist visits could damage the cave's eco-system.

PIROT district

PI01: Eva farm Visočka Ržana

This farm is a Mixed agricultural organization: sheep farm with tendency of agro tourism development and with the plans for the construction of accommodation facilities. They offer milk food products made in the traditional way. In 2021. they should finish the building of accommodation facilities.

- S** Food production in the traditional way while preserving the natural heritage
- W** Poor roads
- O** Unique accommodation facilities on the site by the end of 2021.
- T** No hotels, limited accommodation capacity



PI02: Bohemian horseshoe Pirotd ironed sausage

Restorant Boem in Pirotd produces and serves (among other things) unique Pirotd ironed sausage. This type of sausage is a top specialty produced from the highest quality meat mixed with spices. It is

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supposed to date back to the time of the Turks. Carefully selected pieces of goat, sheep and beef are most often used to make ironed sausage. For many, donkey meat is best. Pork is not used at all for two reasons: the first - because it spoils easily and quickly, and the second is related to the origin from the Turkish era, that is, the sausage is suitable for the Muslim diet. The meat is separated from all the veins, fat, and other unwanted impurities (so only the highest quality meat goes), it is minced and mixed with spices.

- S** Unique intangible (culinary) heritage
- W** Not completely accessible for disabled persons
- O** Rich offer of domestic food products, possibility of wine tasting
- T** Only gastronomic experience – it should be combined with some other site

PI03: Jerma Special Nature Reserve

The special nature reserve Jerma, in the canyon of the river Jerma, stands out as a special reserve that connects three municipalities in the Pirot District: Pirot, Dimitrovgrad and Babušnica. Many historical and cultural monuments, natural attractions, rich flora and fauna, fishing grounds, rocks and climbing areas, the venue of the Outdoor Festival Jerma and the adventure of the Jerma golden trail, a system of trails for walking, hiking, mountain climbing, mountain running and similar sports and extreme activities. The whole road from Pirot to Zvonacka Banja is full of tourist sites and objects of spiritual and cultural heritage, local gastronomy and incredible experiences.

- S** Variety of beautiful places to visit – natural, cultural, religious, sports, ...
- W** Not everywhere accessible for disabled persons
- O** Possibility to combine different contents in the offer
- T** If not overseen properly, mass tourism could spoil the site

PI04: Days of Caribrodka sušenica

"Days of Caribrod dryer" is a tourist-gastronomic competition event that has been held in Dimitrovgrad every autumn since 2014. At this event, local food and other products are exhibited, and the central part of the event is the selection of the best or highest quality "sušenica", a local pork product. Such dried pieces of pork are characteristic for the way they are prepared and the taste for the Pirot region. Every year, the most successful and original exhibitors are awarded.

- S** Unique intangible (culinary) heritage
- W** Not completely accessible for disabled persons
- O** A chance to promote the "accompanying products" such as: processed fruits and vegetables, dairy products, souvenirs, pottery, wood products, iron products, kitchen materials and other handicrafts
- T** Only gastronomic experience – it should be combined with some other site

PI05: Smilovska lakes

Savat I and Savat II or Smilovska lakes are water surfaces located in the Odorovsko field in the municipality of Dimitrovgrad. These artificial accumulations were made in the region of Zabrđe, in the karst Odorovac-Smilovo valley (at about 700 meters above sea level) near the village of Smilovac, after which the Smilovo lakes are named. Nearby is the famous natural rarity Petrlaška cave and the monasteries of St. Petka and the monastery of Saints Kirik and Julita in Smilovci. They are fed primarily



with water from springs located at their bottom.

- S** A lot of different heritage sites nearby
- W** Poor roads (not everywhere)
- O** A Fishermen's paradise
- T** Not popularized and marked enough

PI06: Skok waterfall

Skok waterfall is one of the five waterfalls near the village of Senokos, Dimitrovgrad municipality, and the closest to the village, about 2.5 km away. It can be passed behind it, when it is frozen, that sets it apart from all others on Stara Planina. It is equally beautiful in all seasons. At any time of year you come to Senokos you will be amazed by the beauty of its landscapes.

- S** Pure, untouched nature
- W** Poor roads, not accessible for disabled persons
- O** Four more waterfalls after this one
- T** Not popularized and marked enough, almost not at all

PI07: International Ruj ascent

This mountaineering event gathers a large number of mountaineers and nature lovers every year, it is traditionally held every third weekend in June since 2010, and it is specific in that from the Serbian side the village of Rakita climbs this mountain, while at the same time the Bulgarian mountaineers climb on the other side of the mountain. Mount Ruj stretches on the border of Serbia and Bulgaria, between the village of Rakita in Serbia and the village of Ezdimirci in Bulgaria. The highest peak of the same name is 1,706 meters high, and the sharp Rakitski kamen or Vetren stands out with 1,456 meters. Many say it is the most beautiful peak on the entire mountain.

- S** Beautiful nature with unique social experience, with mountaineers from two countries
- W** Only one day in the year
- O** Extend to two days?
- T** Lack of accommodation capacity

PI08: Vurdijada – Days of vurda

Since 2012, a cultural, gastronomic-tourist, commercial event called Vurdijada has been held in Babušnica every autumn. At this event, the locals from the Lužnica valley and the surrounding area exhibit Vurda and dairy products of domestic production, as well as other products characteristic of this area. Vurda is a traditional and specific milk product produced in Lužnica (around Babušnica) and the Pirot region. It is prepared from cow's, sheep's and goat's milk or a mixture of sheep's or goat's milk with cow's milk. They are obtained by squeezing sour milk. The paprika is placed in the squeezed mixture and stored in a clean container at a moderate temperature for about thirty days. During this time, it boils to obtain a quality product with a sour taste and creamy shape (similar to cream cheese or paprika in sour cream).

- S** Unique intangible (culinary) heritage
- W** Only one weekend in the year

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- O A chance to popularize all domestic products from this area, as well as the cultural heritage
- T It must be preserved authentically, without any modern „appendices“

PI09: Nature park Stara planina Temska-Topli Do-Babin zub

A lot of tourist attractions and localities, as well as events that are interesting and that should be visited when you are in the Stara Planina Nature Park - in the direction leading from Pirot, through the village of Temska to the village of Topli Do, at the foot of Midžor. Midžor Peak is the second highest mountain peak in Serbia (2169 m above sea level), after Djeravica.

- S Variety of beautiful places to visit – natural, cultural, religious, sports
- W Quite difficult to access for disabled persons
- O Very close to the town Pirot and its tourist infrastructure
- T If not managed properly, mass tourism could spoil the site

PI10: Nature park Stara planina Rsovci-Dojkinci-Slavinja

One of the most visited directions to Stara Planina, with the most attractions and tourist sites, starting from the mountain bike trail at 4. km, through the lookouts to Pirot field and Vlačka planina, but also to Stara planina, cultural wealth and heritage of this part of the mountain. The most visited localities in recent years such as the Kozji kamen lookout point, Slavinjsko grlo canyon, Tupavica waterfall; the most modern mountain lodge in the village of Dojkinci; local handicrafts and food, Šilja and Eva farms, trout pond; system of hiking, biking and hiking trails through strict nature reserves; Internationally important area of birds (IBA), butterflies; the largest protected natural asset Koprenski waterfalls, Tri kladenca, Beledje pass and connection with the area of the village Topli to and on the other side the village Gostuša.

- S A lot of of beautiful spots and areas – natural, religious, sports, cultural
- W Quite difficult to access for disabled persons
- O Ideal for active holidays, staying in the countryside and outdoor activities and enjoying natural rarities
- T Especially exposed to all the risks of mass tourism

PI11: Savić Winery

The winery was founded in 2017 in Pirot. They produce wine in the traditional way, through controlled origin of grapes. In addition to the wine itself, the heritage is preserved through the design of labels (motifs of the famous Pirot carpet) and through the names of wines for which words from the local dialect are used. Along with the consumption of wine, it is also possible to taste traditional Pirot specialties: ironed sausage and Pirot hard cheese.

- S Probably the only proper Winery in Pirot region
- W They are still growing
- O Connection with cultural heritage: the wine labels are designed so that both the name and the appearance preserve the tradition of Pirot patterns, but also verbal localizations
- T Traditional way of wine producing must be preserved



PI12: Nature park Stara planina Lake Zavojsko–Gostuša–Pakleštica

Zavojsko Lake is an artificial lake, located 17 km northeast of Pirot, in the middle part of the Visočica River. It has pure water of Stara Planina rivers and streams, it is rich in fish of various species. Around the lake are beautiful villages that provide accommodation, with plateaus and peaks everywhere around. The village of Gostuša or Stone village is located at 700 meters above sea level and is a part of the Stara Planina Nature Park. The specificity of the unusual place is the unique architecture that has been preserved in its authentic condition. The village of Pakleštica is ideal for hunters and fishermen, and of course nature lovers who like to walk through such landscapes. 3 km above the village begins a canyon in the length of about 2.5 km of the Bishop's Plate. In the village itself is the church of St. Archangel Michael from the 19th century.

- S** Great mixture of different beauties and heritages
- W** Poor roads, limited access for disabled persons
- O** Possibility of swimming, fishing and other water sports and activities
- T** Undeveloped tourist infrastructure

Pčinjski district

PČ01: Jovačka lakes

Jovačka Lakes are located 10 km from Vladičin Han. They occupy the northern slope of the extinct volcano, Oblik, and the right, valley side of the Jovačka river. They were formed in 1977, when the Jovačka River was blocked due to a landslide, which wiped out the homes of 58 families, who now live in the nearby village of Stubal. Only the village cemetery and 4 neighborhoods were spared. The largest lake - Jovacko is 1,500 m long, 200 m wide and about 10 m deep. In addition to it, there are 6 smaller lakes.

- S** Natural site with lush vegetation and abundant wildlife; various outdoor activities
- W** Lacking tourist infrastructure for activities other than walking, swimming, taking a boat trip or fishing
- O** Hiking possibilities
- T** If not overseen properly, mass tourism could spoil the site



PČ02: Vidovdan days event

The event is held every June in Vladičin Han, as the city holiday. It consists of a series of cultural, entertainment and sports events. On Vidovdan itself, June 28, the holiday begins with a solemn liturgy in the church of St. Prince Lazar, followed by a liturgy in the streets of the city, cutting the feast cake "at the Cross" in the Liberation Park.

In the evening, an art and music programs are organized at the "Kunjak" Sports Center.

- S** Series of cultural, religious, entertainment and sports events, mix of events where anyone can find something of interest
- W** May be overcrowded, the religious background of the event may be a drawback for some tourists
- O** If the stay is extended, other than getting familiar with the tradition of "slava", Vladičin Han is a good starting point for various one-day excursions

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T -

PČ03: Monastery of St. Elijah

The monastery of St. Elijah is a monastery of the Serbian Orthodox Church, located about ten kilometers southwest of Vladicin Han, not far from the village of Kacapun. It was built on a small plateau. Toplica, a stream of pure mountain water, flows along the monastery complex.

The monastery church is a single-nave building and consists of an altar space, a nave and a narthex. There are 21 icons in the thematic repertoire of the iconostasis.

- S** Orthodox religious site set in a nice natural background
- W** May only interest historical and cultural tourists
- O** Several springs thought to be healing in the near vicinity accessible by road
- T** In order to keep the area authentic, touristic development should be carefully conducted

PČ04: Overload music festival

The "Overload" music festival is a unique music and entertainment event held in Vladičin Han. Alongside music events, a big biker gathering is being organized, and the visitors can camp on the Sports center's premises and use its pool for free.

- S** Music and biker-friendly venue
- W** The area can get overcrowded
- O** Good starting point to visit some natural sites (i.e. Jovacka lakes)
- T** -

PČ05: Monastery of the Dormition of the Mother of God

The Monastery of the Dormition of the Mother of God is located in the village of Mrtvica, 14 km from Vladicin Han, at the very exit from the Grdelica gorge.

It is believed that the monastery was built at the end of the 5th or the beginning of the 6th century. It got its present form in the middle of the 20th century. However, its corpus differs: the triconch nave, which would first belong to the early Byzantine architecture of the 6th century, the narthex, extended at the beginning of the 17th century, the northern chapel, rebuilt in 1837-1843. years, and a porch from the end of the 19th century.

The monastery is located on a stone plateau that is barely wider than the building itself.

- S** Valuable monastery; stunning location; recent stone steps leading to the monastery
- W** -
- O** Near Vladicin Han and Vlasina lake
- T** In order to keep the area authentic, touristic development should be carefully conducted

PČ06: Archaeological site Kale Krsevica

At the site of Kale-Krševica, significant remains of an urban settlement dating from the 4th and the first decades of the 3rd century BC have been found. Built after the Greek model, the settlement maintained

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close ties with Macedonia and Greece throughout its entire existence. The late horizon dates from the 2nd/1st centuries BC, when the Celts (the Scordisci) and other Balkan barbarians used the abandoned acropolis as an important base and stronghold for their plundering campaigns of Macedonia and Greece.

- S** Archeological site from the 4th century BC; local event held on the site
- W** Excavations have not been finished and there is no real tourist infrastructure
- O** Cultural and historic tourism; the site is surrounded by beautiful mountains with hiking possibilities
- T** Lack of tourist infrastructure, insufficient information concerning the archeological site; if tourism develops archeological excavations may come to a hold

PČ07: Distillery Mitić

The Distillery "Mitić" is a family owned distillery that grew from a long family tradition of rakija (brandy) making, traditional Serbian beverage. It deals with distillation, purification and mixing of drinks, namely plum, apple and grape brandy.

- S** Brandy distillery; local brandy tasting
- W** Still working on distillery's presentation for tourists
- O** Organized tours for tourists to get familiar with the production of brandy
- T** -

PČ08: Bora Stanković House Museum

The birth house of the writer Borisav Stanković is located in Grandma Zlata's Street, on a plot bought by Bora's grandma, Zlata, after whom the street was named. As a variant of the developed Moravian house, it represents a valuable monument of traditional architecture. Alongside the traditional architecture, the museum has a rich display of Bora's personal belongings and various household items.

- S** Birth house of a famous Serbian writer; monument of traditional Moravian architecture; collection of items testifying of life in the 19th century Serbia
- W** Currently, the other museum buildings are being renovated, making them inaccessible for tourists to visit
- O** Other than cultural and historical tourism, the city of Vranje is surrounded by numerous breathtaking natural sites
- T** -

PČ09: Stari Dani wine cellar

The Stari Dani cellar was founded in 2005, by two wine loving families.

One vineyard is near the winery, in the village of Rakovac, and the other near Leskovac. The vineyard in Rakovec is located at an altitude of 470m, has an area of 14ha, and the grape varieties are grown Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir, Muscat Hamburg. The cellar of the winery, equipped with modern equipment, is located in a family house in the village of Rakovac near Bujanovac.

- S** Vineyard with a wine shop located in Leskovac; locally produced wine from grapes exclusively from their vineyards



- W** Seasonal (as far as the vineyard is concerned. The owners are interested in having organized visits of the vineyard and their cellars, but have not fully developed their project yet)
- O** Vineyard and winery tours could be organized
- T** -

PČ10: Vlasina lake

The Vlasina Lake, 12 km long and 35 m deep, is located on the Vlasina Plateau, at 1,213 m above sea level. It's an artificial lake, created by building a dam in the fifties of the 20th century.

There are 2 islands on the lake - Stratoria and Dugi del. However, but the biggest attraction are the "floating islands" - parts of the mainland that change position and float on the lake.

- S** Outstanding nature, still quite unspoiled and under-developed; surrounded by mountains
- W** Poor online tourist presentation
- O** Outdoor activities (hiking, canoeing...) can be combined with historic and religious tourism (lots of churches nearby) and cultural tourism (different events held throughout the summer)
- T** If the arrival of a bigger number of tourists isn't managed, the site may lose some of its authentic feel

PČ011: Čemernik mountain

The Mountain Čemernik is a mountain of mild relief, whose highest peak is called Veliki Čemernik and is 1638 meters high. Chemernik is a rather spacious and extremely wooded mountain. There are wild deciduous, century-old forests in the whole area of Čemernik. Like all the mountains around Lake Vlasina, Čemernik is rich in rivers and streams. There are many diverse plants on Čemernik, many of which are medicinal, but also čemerika, a poisonous plant after which the mountain itself got its name. Čemernik is known for its blueberries, raspberries and blackberries.

- S** Unspoiled nature perfect for hikers of all levels; different medicinal plants and berries
- W** Not suitable for disabled people
- O** Lake Vlasina with various summer events and nearby churches give a full and diverse experience of the area
- T** Without supervision, mass tourism could spoil the nature

PČ012: Markovo Kale

Some of the most significant archeological testimonies about the history of Vranje come from the fortress of Markovo Kale. Here, life began in prehistory, continued in late antiquity and ended in the early Byzantine period. It is located 4.5 km north of Vranje at an altitude of 750 m.

- S** Architectural, historical and cultural site
- W** The question of its presentation not regulated yet
- O** Hiking and tourist offer of the city of Vranje itself
- T** If massively visited, the remains may deteriorate

PČ013: Church of the Holy Trinity in Izvor

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The Church of the Holy Trinity in Izvor is one of the 37 churches of the Diocese of Vranje. The church is abandoned today, as is the village of Izvor, which according to the 2011 census has only 61 inhabitants. The church is located four kilometers northeast of the town of Bosilegrad, along the border with the Republic of Bulgaria, at the foot of Mount Rudina. It is bordered on all sides by mountains. The Church of the Holy Trinity is one of the largest churches in Southern Serbia. The church is a single-nave building with an open narthex on the west and an apse on the east. The inner surface of the church is 760 square meters, and the outer 820 square meters. The church has a dome above the narthex in which the bell is placed.

- S** Old abandoned monastery; the church is valuable
- W** Point of interest exclusively for those interested in religion and history; accommodation may be difficult to book
- O** Local honey producers in the area
- T** In order to keep the area authentic, touristic development should be carefully conducted

Zaječarski district

ZA01: Jovic winery

Jović Winery is a family cellar with a tradition of several generations of famous winegrowers and cellar men. Grapes are processed from their own harvests and vineyards located on the sunny hills in the village of Potrkanje in the center of the Knjaževac-Dzervina vineyards. The characteristics of the harvest have been preserved in its own wine shop, established in 1987. The quality of the wine is confirmed by the highest awards, gold and silver medals from international fairs and wine festivals. Jović Winery is proud of its products, in the current range of 8 wines: Chardonnay, Rhein Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Rosé "Dionizije", Vranac, Višnjica, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Sauvignon Premium barrique.



- S** Tradition of several generations of famous winegrowers and cellarmen;
- W** Short stay; Specialised;
- O** Need better promotion; To be combined with other attractions;
- T** Competition in wine production;

ZA02: Felix Romuliana

Gamzigrad is an archeological site near Zajecar in eastern Serbia of the ancient Roman imperial palace of Felix Romuliana, which has been on the UNESCO World Heritage List since June 29, 2007. Gamzigrad is the residence of the Roman emperor Gaius Valerius Maximianus Galerius (293–311), son-in-law of Diocletian. He named him Romuliana after his mother Romuli. The palace never seems to have been completed, and the emperors of the 4th century left the magnificent estate to the Christian church. During the 5th century, the palace was destroyed by barbarians, and in the 6th century, Romulian was rebuilt by Justinian I in the form of a border fortress.

- S** An archeological site on the UNESCO World Heritage List;
- W** Need better promotion; Specialised (archaeology);

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- O** Its potential is underestimated; Combined with other attractions in a tour; Student groups; School visit;
- T** Other attractions;

ZA03: Rtanj Mountain

This mountain between Paracin and Zajecar has numerous underground springs, caves and pits in its womb. Rtanj is a limestone massif of the Carpathian-Balkan mountain system, and its eastern border is defined by Crni Timok and the Boljevac-Rujište line. The geological substrate consists of limestone, Paleozoic shales and sandstones. A narrow belt of dolomite is concentrated in the belt of 700-950 meters. The area has a continental mountain climate and is characterized by mixed fir and beech forests, as well as numerous meadow formations. Several plant species grow only on this mountain, and the most famous Rtanj tea (*Saturea montana*) is very effective in the treatment of bronchitis, asthma, cough and inflammation of the respiratory organs.

- S** Hiking trails with beautiful nature; No pollution, clean air; Great for photographers;
- W** Need better accommodation and variety of the accommodation (hotels, ethno villages, guest houses, ect.); Need restaurants;
- O** Development of rural tourism; Improving marketing; Development of camping sites; Season extension; Many events can be organised for tourists (trekking, herbal and fruit picking, rehabilitation tourism and school educational programs in this area)
- T** Specialised for active tourism (hiking);

ZA04: Bogovinska cave

Bogovinska cave was the object of research of numerous speleological teams due to the length and quality of the cave jewelry. Bogovinska cave is located in the southeastern foothills of the Kucajski mountains. A footpath has been built to the entrance to the cave. Twenty years ago, Bogovinska Cave was the longest cave in Serbia - 5020 m and among the longest caves in the former Yugoslavia. At the same time, it was the only large cave in Serbia, which was not arranged for tourist visits.

- S** The length and quality of the cave jewelry;
- W** Short visit; Specialised;
- O** Can be combined with other attractions in the region;
- T** Mass tourism can damage it;

ZA05: Pećura Black River spring

Below the southern slopes of the Kucaj mountain, not far from Krivo vir, the river Crni Timok springs from three caves. The water at the very spring called Pećura is crystal clear and ice-cold all year round, even on the hottest summer days. The remains of the mill are visible near the cave, and the braver ones, on summer days, can easily reach the cave itself, from which ice water gushes. The water is not deep, but it is very cold, which is why this kind of adventure is recommended only to those in good condition. Black Timok, on its way to the estuary, winds through three valleys and two gorges of Jablanovačka and Baba Jone. From the source to the mouth, this river is 84 kilometers long, and some of its tributaries are: Radovanska river, Arnauta, Zlotkska river and Brestovacka river.

- S** Unexplored, untouched nature;
- W** Need better connection; Need accommodation and restaurants;

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- O** Hiking trails; Rural tourism; Camping area;
- T** Seasonal (during the summer months the spring get dry);

ZA06: Native house of sculptor Ljubinka Savić – Grasi

The native house of Ljubinka Savić Grasi is located in her native village of Ilino near Boljevac and was ceremoniously opened after her death on December 1, 1999. The house dates from the end of the XIX Century. It was completely reconstructed and turned into the Homeland of the sculptor Ljubinka Savić - Grasi, in September 2009. The house is furnished in a traditional style with home-made items from the residents of Ilina. In the room of Ljubinka Savić - Grassi, an exhibition was made about the life and work of this artist, who lived and worked in Belgrade, but remained attached to her homeland until the end of her life. She mostly worked in plaster, terracotta and bronze.

- S** Traditional house from XIX century; Artist work; Ethno village;
- W** Small groups; Short stay;
- O** City break destination; Can be combined with other attractions in the region;
- T** Strong regional competition from other tourist destinations;

ZA07: Monastery Krepičevac

Historical writings about Monastery Krepičevac are rare. The time of construction is connected to the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century. The fresco-painting is very valuable, so the monastery itself is one of the important cultural monuments. The area of the remaining fresco-painting in the monastery is modest and dates from the first half of the 16th century. Around it, there are 12 monastery springs concentrated in a small area (about 1000 m2) whose water has long been assessed as healing and invigorating.

- S** Unspoiled nature; Religious place; Hiking area;
- W** Hidden; Bad infrastructure; Modest appearance of the church;
- O** Hiking; Rural tourism; Religious tourism;
- T** Mass tourism will affect;

ZA08: Church of the Holy Mother of God

The base of the church is in the shape of an inscribed cross. It is vaulted with a semi-circular vault, and its domes rest on pendants. The architecture is a combination of Romanesque, Gothic and Moravian architecture. The frescoes of the church are of exceptional value, both stylistically and ichnographically. Some of the frescoes are unique in Serbian medieval painting. Archaeological excavations, which followed the conservation works from 1979 to 1981, confirmed the existence of a necropolis with 70 graves around the church

- S** Exceptional artistic value of the architecture and frescos;
- W** Out of the main roads; Short stay;
- O** Religious tourism; Rural tourism; Extension of stay;
- T** Mass tourism;

ZA09: Turkish bath Amam

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The greatest wealth of Sokobanja are the mineral waters discovered in Roman times, on which today rests almost the entire development of local health tourism. The thermal springs of Sokobanja are among the best in the country. From ancient times to the present day, this hammam has been renovated several times in order to maintain its historical value, health practicality and tourist attractiveness. In the past, it was never buried and neglected, and today, as in the past, you can enjoy swimming pools full of healing water, which makes it unique in this area.

- S** A unique attraction in Serbia; wellness and spa treatments; City break;
- W** Need better promotion; Small groups;
- O** Can be combined with other attractions; Good position; Wellness and spa tourism;
- T** Other attractions in the town; Mass groups can affect;

Za10: Soko Grad (Falcon city)

The fortress was founded in the 6th century during the reign of the Eastern Roman Emperor Justinian I, in order to prevent the invasions of the Pannonian Avars and Slavs on the Balkan Peninsula. In the 11th century, Sokograd was first mentioned in a written document, then it was conquered by Stefan Nemanja in 1172, and since then Sokograd has been a part of the Serbian medieval state. At the beginning of the 15th century, Sokograd was occupied by the Turks. After the Turks in 1689, Sokograd was conquered together by Serbs and Austrians, and then in the middle of the 18th century it was temporarily occupied by Austrians. Sokograd was briefly occupied by the hajduk Veljko Petrović in 1808. After that, Sokograd was neglected and only ruins remain as a memorial to some ancient times.

- S** Fortification; Amazing hiking path; Wonderful views;
- W** Need to be fit (medium easy);
- O** Can be combined with other attractions in the town and area; Great position; Hiking paths;
- T** The fortress is really bad preserved and the government need to restore it, because it is unsafe;

Jablanički district

LE01: Church of Odzaklija

The church dedicated to the Birth of the Holy Mother of God (Mala Gospojina) was built in 1803, on the foundations of the existing temple. It is located in Leskovac. The church is wide and low, as if it has sunk into the ground. And not only does it look like that, but it was really buried for about 1 meter, so as not to catch the eye of the then Turkish authorities. It is unique in that there is a brick chimney in it, which is not characteristic of today's churches and that is why the church got a name Odzaklija.

- S** Unusual church; Good position; City tours;
- W** Short visit;
- O** Religious tourism; City tours; Starting point to many attractions;
- T** Other attractions in the city;

LE02: Roštiljijada





Roštiljijada is a synonym for the city of Leskovac. A quarter of a century has passed from the idea of organizing a gastronomic festival in the city of barbecue, which originated back in 1965, to the realization of the First "Barbecue Festival" in 1990. In the following years, this event became the largest gastronomic event in the Balkans. Considering the number of visitors, exhibitors and accompanying contents, "Rostilijada" is one of the most important manifestations in the Republic, and rightly occupies a special place in the national calendar of events of the Tourist Organization of Serbia.

- S** Gastronomic festival with variety of experiences;
- W** Seasonality (just once a year);
- O** Culinary tourism; Good road connections, close to corridor E-75; Well connected with Sofia, Skopje and Thessaloniki; Starting point to many attractions;
- T**

LE03: Janjuški monasteries

On the slopes of Suva Planina, in the village of Jašunja not far from Leskovac there are two old monasteries. Near the village of Jašunja is the monastery of the Mother of God Jašunjska. Built on the foundations of a basilica from the 6th century, this monastery was built in 1499. Due to their historical, architectural and artistic values, the Jašunji monasteries - St. John the Baptist and the Monastery of the Most Holy Mother of God were placed under the protection.

- S** Beautiful medieval monasteries; Very peaceful area; Great nature; Hiking trails;
- W** Need better tourist signalization; No restaurants or accommodations nearby; Bad road connections;
- O** Pilgrimage tourism; Combination of religious heritage and natural site; Development of rural tourism;
- T** One day tour; Special (religious) interests;

LE04: Vucjanka river canyon

The Vucjanka canyon is part of the valley of the Vucjanka river, a right tributary of the Veternica. The canyon is cut into the northern slopes of the Kukavica Mountain and is 2 km long, cut between the peaks of Kitka (988 m) and Samaric (619 m). The entrance to the canyon is at about 500 meters above sea level, and the exit is at about 340 meters above sea level. The riverbed in the canyon is full of "whirlpools", waterfalls and cascades. "Whirlpools" attract special attention of people and actually represent stone pots or cauldrons. On a protruding cliff on the left bank of the canyon, 150 m above the river, is the Green City. At the exit from the canyon is the hydroelectric power plant Vucje, built in 1903.

- S** Unique nature; Great variable activities such as canyoning, hiking, etc.;
- W** Need better tourist signalization; Need accommodations and restaurants; Away from the main roads; Need equipment to get into the canyon;
- O** Specialised adventure tourism (rock climbing, canyoning, etc.); Development of rural tourism; Many events can be organised for tourists; Can be combined with other tourist attractions (Green Skobaljic fortress, Vucje hydroelectric plant, church St. John)
- T** Specific interests and fitness level (canyoning, hiking);

LE05: Carnival Leskovac

The project is co-funded by the EU through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Serbia Programme.



The Leskovac Carnival is an event that has been held since 2006 in the center of Leskovac, and the intention is to revive the memory of the Easter processions that moved through the streets of Leskovac in the 1930s. Today, the Leskovac Carnival is one of the most visited events in Serbia. Carnival is a holiday of joy, variety, serenity, fun and youth. That is why it begins with the carnival round, the anthem of the FECC and the Leskovac Carnival, and ends with a big fireworks display and a carnival ball under masks.

- S** Unusual festival with variety of experiences and events;
- W** Seasonality (just once a year);
- O** Good road connections, close to corridor E-75; Well connected with Sofia, Skopje and Thessaloniki; Starting point to many attractions;
- T** Inconsistency of manifestations in the municipality and further (regional and local events that take place at the same time with the same concept);

LE06: Tourist event Wine ball

As the people of Vlasotince, they say, wine is their tradition, they enjoy it, write songs about it and most households keep "God's drink" in their cellars. The Wine Ball is held in Vlasotince, with the selection of the best wine and winegrowers, the goddess of wine, caricatures on wine and grapes, songs in the Prizren-Timok dialect on wine and grapes, as well as the selection of the best swimmer for wine barrels. Knights have been present at the Ball since the establishment of the Wine Knights' Order "Simeon", in 2010, as promoters of wines from the region they come from, as part of this two-day festival, they organize the Wine Salon of Southern Serbia.

- S** Interesting wine festival with variety of experiences and events;
- W** Seasonality (just once a year);
- O** Creating a positive image of the destination; Improved marketing; Season extension; Development of rural tourism; Many events can be organised for tourists;
- T** Inconsistency of manifestations in the municipality and further (regional and local events that take place at the same time with the same concept);

LE07: Kosta Stamenković Memorial House

The memorial house of the national hero Kosta Stamenković represents a cultural heritage monument. Kosta Stamenković (Leskovac, October 3, 1893 - Šilovo, March 26, 1942) was a participant in the People's Liberation Struggle and a national hero of Yugoslavia. The house where the revolutionary, communist and fighter for workers' rights lived was opened to visitors in 1969. The house is on the ground floor, it consists of three rooms with the interior of a workers' house from the beginning of the 20th century, while today it is part of the National Museum in Leskovac, which takes care of it. To the left and right of the entrance are the memorial rooms of Kosta Stamenković and his daughter Lepša Stamenković, also a revolutionary and a communist, with their personal belongings. Documents and photographs show the development of the workers' movement from 1918 to 1942 in the hall.

- S** Cultural –historical site; Interest in WWII and Partisans; City tour;
- W** Short visit; Specialised; Need a guide;
- O** Starting point to many attractions; City tour;
- T** Too specialised (WWII, Partisans);

LE08: Ethno house Dimitrijevic

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The house of Bora Dimitrijević Piksla, today also known as the City House, is a great example of a Balkan-style house. Bora Dimitrijević Piksla, was born in 1915 in Leskovac, where he finished elementary and high school, after which he went to study agronomy in Belgrade. After returning from Belgrade, in 1934, he formed the first amateur theater. He was an amateur actor, director and later manager of the theater. In 1941, he was among the first to go to the Partizans, to the Kukavica-Leskovac partisan detachment. The Gestapo shot him on June 27, 1942, at the Nis fortress. The house exists for more than 150 years.

- S** Interest in WWII and Partisans; Cultural –historical site; City tour;
- W** Specialised; Short visit; Need a guide;
- O** City tour; Starting point to many attractions;
- T** Too specialised (WWII, Partisans);

LE09: Textile Museum

The Textile Museum in Strojkovce is the only museum of this kind in Serbia. It is located in a watermill that was built in the second half of the 19th century. Concerning its size and living premises within it, was owned by wealthy Turks. In 1884, the enterprising people of Leskovac opened the first braid factory in it, which is considered the beginning of the textile industry in Serbia.

- S** Unique museum in the Balkans; Cultural – historical site;
- W** Need a guide; Specific interest;
- O** Interesting rare craft;
- T** Away from the main roads; Other activities (Vucjanka canyon, etc.);

LE10: Sijarinska banja

Sijarinska Banja is the pearl of southern Serbia. With a recognizable geyser and numerous springs of mineral water, it helps in the treatment of many diseases. A hot water geyser whose water column reaches a height of 8 meters, 18 natural mineral springs with different therapeutic properties and temperatures between 32 and 78 degrees, makes Sijarinska Banja unique in Europe. The traditional tourist manifestation "Geyser Nights" is an event that is held every year in Sijarinska Banja during the month of July.

- S** Due to specific physical and chemical characteristics, great for medical rehabilitation.
- W** Need better infrastructure; Need better signalization; Need better promotion; Need variety of the accommodations;
- O** Need to invest in facilities and roads; Need to improve the existing tourism offer and develop new products and services; Creating a positive image of the destination; Development of rural tourism;
- T** Strong regional competition from other tourist destinations;

LE11: Justiniana Prima Archeological Site

Justiniana Prima was a [Byzantine](#) city that existed from 535 to 615, and currently an archaeological site, known as Caričin Grad, near modern [Lebane](#) in southern [Serbia](#). Most researchers today consider this impressive early Byzantine city of Justinian Prima, the endowment of one of the largest Byzantine emperors – Justinian I (527-565), who's Novel XI from 535 assigned a new city the role of the Archdiocese seat and the Praetorian prefecture of North Illyricum.

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- S** An archeological site with interesting history;
- W** Need better promotion; Need better infrastructure; Need better regional cooperation;
- O** Archaeological – cultural tour; Many events can be organised for tourists; Development of rural tourism;
- T** Archaeological ruins should be protected, perhaps enclosed by a wall similar to the original fortification, to avoid the destruction and dispersal of archaeological remains.

LE12: Radan Mountain

Radan is a mountain and park of nature in the south of Serbia, in the municipalities of Lebane, Bojnik, Medvedja, Kursumlija and Prokuplje and covers an area of 466 km². It is located between the river Toplica in the north and Jablanica in the south. It belongs to the Rhodope Mountains and is part of the Serbian-Macedonian mainland, and is located exactly where the Dinarides face the Rhodopes. The highest peak is Šopot at 1409m above sea level. On a slightly lower, Petrovo vrh (Veliki Petrovac) around 1150 - above sea level, there is a church of St. Peter on the plateau of the peak. It is located southwest of Prokuplje and west of Lebane and Medvedja. On the slopes of the mountain are Archaeological site Caricin Grad, Prolom Banja and Devil's Town.

- S** Nature trails combining beautiful nature and a cultural site; No pollution, clean air; good for photographers;
- W** Need better tourist signalization; Need better accommodation and variety of the accommodation (hotels, ethno villages, guest houses, ect.); Need better regional cooperation;
- O** Improving marketing; Creating a positive image of the destination; Development of rural tourism; Development of camping sites; Season extension; Many events can be organised for tourists (trekking, herbal and fruit picking, rehabilitation tourism and school educational programs in this area)
- T** Off the main roads; Strong regional competition from other tourist destinations;



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