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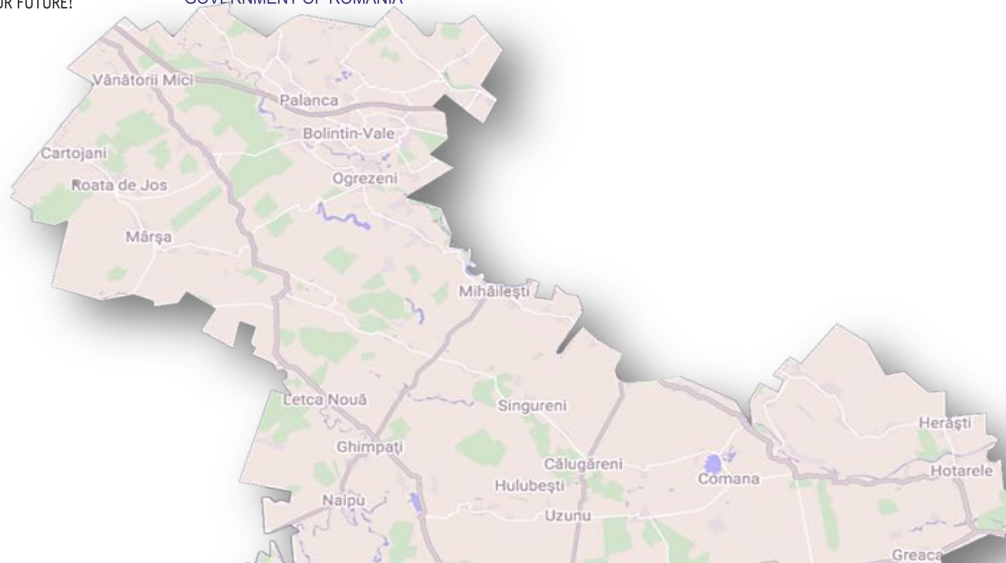
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## STUDY

**SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE RESOURCES NECESSARY FOR THE CREATION OF INTEGRATED  
TOURISM PRODUCTS FOR THE PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL AND  
RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN THE CROSS-BORDER REGION OF RUSE-GIURGIU**

*The document was developed within the framework of the project "Christian Heritage in the Cultural Corridor Ruse-Giurgiu, CHRIST HERITAGE ROBG-302*

*Implemented under the INTERREG V-A Romania-Bulgaria  
Program 2014-2020, Priority Axis 2*



**Developer:**



ROMANIA - BULGARIA

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## Introduction

The study "*Sustainable use of the resources needed to create integrated tourism products for the promotion and development of cultural and religious tourism in the cross-border region*" was developed within the framework of the project "Christian Heritage along the Ruse-Giurgiu Cultural Corridor", **CHRIST HERITAGE** ROBG-302, implemented under the **INTERREG V-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme**, Priority Axis 2, Green Region, Specific Objective 2.1 "Improving the conservation and sustainable use of natural heritage, resources and cultural heritage".

The implementation of the project "Christian Heritage along the Ruse-Giurgiu Cultural Corridor", **CHRIST HERITAGE** ROBG-302, aims to promote the integrated development of the cross-border area Ruse-Giurgiu through the development of cultural and religious tourism based on the sustainable use of cultural and historical and religious heritage in the region and the development of tourism in the border region, by promoting religious and cultural heritage.

Partners of the project are St. Petka Church - Ruse (Lead Beneficiary ), Territorial Administrative Unit - Municipality of Vedeia (Beneficiary 2) and Church of St. George -Ruse (Beneficiary 3).

The purpose of this study is subject to one of the general objectives of the project, namely: the creation of three integrated cross-border tourist products, which will include tourist routes designed to increase the number of tourists visiting the Ruse-Giurgiu area. St.Petka/Paraskeva Church (Ruse, Bulgaria), St. Panteleimon Church " (Giurgiu, Romania) and the Church of St. Georgi" (Ruse, Bulgaria).

As a result of the project "Christian Heritage along the Cultural Corridor Ruse-Giurgiu", code ROBG-302, the goal is also to increase the number of tourist nights in the cross-border area by 35,000 nights compared to the previous annual statistics.

The current Draw aims to identify three **new integrated cross-border tourist products**, which can significantly contribute to an increase in the number of tourists visiting the Ruse-Giurgiu area.

Achieving the objective of the Study includes several objectives to be pursued and achieved as follows:

- identification of the current context of cultural and religious tourism in the ruse-Giurgiu cross-border area;
- identification of existing forms of tourism, including routes specific to each area;
- identification of the cultural and religious heritage of the ruse-Giurgiu cross-border area;
- analysis of cross-border tourist supply and demand, with a focus on cultural and religious tourism;



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- identify vulnerabilities affecting the sustainable use of cultural and religious tourism resources, as well as propose measures to mitigate the impact of vulnerabilities in the Ruse-Giurgiu cross-border area;
- making recommendations on the demand for integrated tourism products;
- making recommendations on cultural and religious routes for the promotion of the cultural and religious heritage of the Ruse-Giurgiu cross-border area;
- formulating recommendations for the promotion of the created cultural and religious tourist products;
- identification of the current legislative framework underlying the promotion of tourism, as well as those models of good practice that can be implemented by local public authorities to harmonise the expectations of tourists with the tourist proposal.

As a study, this document aims to establish an action plan and clear tools for the sustainable use of cultural and religious tourism resources in the Cross-Border Region, in this regard, following a series of steps as follows:

- defining the common framework for cross-border tourist resources (existing legislative framework, initiatives, activities and programmes, etc.) ;
- collection of data from the territory to identify the main strengths and weaknesses, as well as the existing opportunities and threats in the field of tourist resources, in line with trends in the supply and demand of tourism;
- identification of existing forms of tourism, presentation of the cultural corridor Ruse-Giurgiu;
- description of religious cultural tourism in the cross-border area Ruse Giurgiu;
- presentation of ways to sustainable capitalisation of cultural and religious tourism resources from the cross-border area for the promotion and development of this type of tourism.

The importance of developing this study stems from the need to compare the requirements of the tourist market with the tourist proposal to harmonize the characteristics of the proposal with the existing demand from tourists, which is also a specific type of tourism, respectively cultural and religious.

Furthermore, it is important to note that such a project can increase economic indicators in the cross-border region by creating new jobs, promoting local culture (traditions, customs, local cuisine, etc.) and supporting local businesses by increasing the number of tourists and visits to the area.

This study was prepared exclusively based on information provided by the three partners of the Project "Christian Heritage along the Ruse-Giurgiu Cultural Corridor", as well as based on formal discussions with them, which, together with the official information and statistics used in this study, is a starting point for this document.

The role of the study, as mentioned above, is to *identify three integrated cross-border tourist products*, which will include tourist routes designed to increase the number of tourists visiting the Ruse-Giurgiu area to create an analysis based on how recommendations for improving



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religious cultural tourism in the two cross-border regions can be provided.

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## Chapter 1. General conceptual framework

To create a vision for the existing tourism in the two regions, an analysis of the geographical position of Comuna Vedeia II and the Russe is useful for better deepening identifying and analyzing different characteristics, respectively common points of the two regions. , over time, very similar rituals and customs were created between the two peoples, Romanians and Bulgarians, in terms of culture and religion, the separate historical fates of the two peoples and the separate geographical location of the Danube also led to the development of different customs.

Geographical positioning is only one of the factors that determine the development of certain cultural and religious traditions in the two regions of interest for this study. Both the Ruse region in Bulgaria and Giurgiu District in Romania have certain characteristics and features specific to the region, which has a separate development based on different past and history, but also in general, which both regions had over time. The study will also bring to the fore some features of the two regions to be able to show a broader vision and image covering the whole aspect and which can provide sufficient information for a sufficiently complete and objective analysis, within the boundary of this information may include recommendations that may have a real impact on religious cultural tourism in both areas of interest.

### 1.1. Methodological aspects

The study "*Sustainable use of the resources needed to create integrated tourism products for the promotion and development of cultural and religious tourism in the Cross-Border Region*" is an analysis that focuses on the market segment of cultural and religious tourism in the Ruse-Giurgiu region and uses statistics, surveys and data provided by the competent official institutions regulated in this regard, such as *Romanian National Statistical Institute*; *Bulgarian National Statistical Institute*.

The survey methodology shall include the following defining coordinates:

- ✓ **Establishment of the conceptual framework and the objectives/purpose of the drawdown**, respectively defining the purpose of the survey presented by the creation of *three integrated cross-border* tourist products, which will include tourist routes aimed at increasing the number of tourists visiting Ruse-Giurgiu by collecting all the data necessary to justify the Study, which leads, on the one hand, to the formulation of recommendations on the search for integrated tourist products, which include cultural and religious routes designed to promote heritage objectives rehabilitated by the project and, on the other hand, to identify weaknesses, vulnerabilities affecting the sustainable use of cultural and religious tourism resources from cross-border Ruse-Giurgiu area; after the processing of the data, the main elements concerning the problems of cultural and religious tourism can be produced and the action plan of this study will be built on them.
- ✓ **Identification of the resources needed to produce the Survey.**



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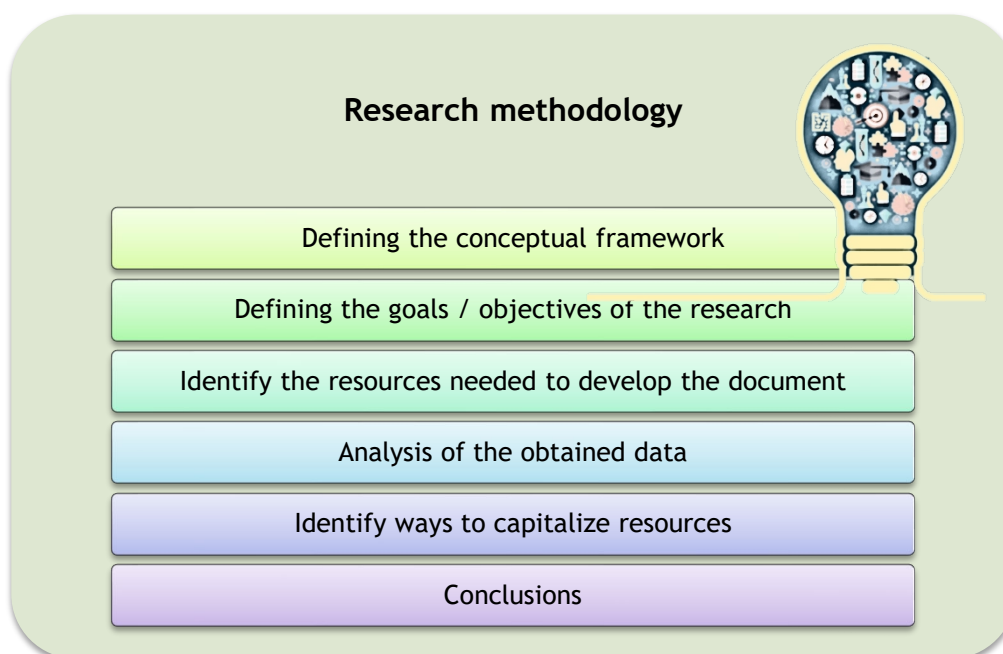


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- ✓ **Analysis of the data received**
- ✓ **Identifying ways of capitalising on the resources of cultural and religious tourism** requires, based on the results presented above, to formulate the main recommendations on the guidelines to be adopted to capitalise on sustainable cultural and religious tourist tourism resources.
- ✓ **Conclusion**

In terms of the research tools used, the quantitative methods of study (in this case statistics) were combined with the qualitative methods of study (in this case the information provided by the Project Partners, St. Petka-Ruse Church (Lead Beneficiary), territorial administrative unit - Comuna Vedeia (Beneficiary 2) and St. George's Church-Ruse (Beneficiary 3). The use of a mixed tool contributes to the creation of a comprehensive vision of the topic examined.



From the point of view of data processing technology, the following software is used:

- **Microsoft Excel**, which will aggregate the data, thus developing a series of documents in a tabular format that centralize the main types of information received (e.g. the processing of statistical information);
- **Microsoft Word** or another compatible text editing application that will develop documents.

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### 1.1.1. Definitions of key concepts

In a world that is constantly changing, it is unnecessary to mention that in every area competition is a constant element. Concerning tourist destinations, their main goal is to attract and maintain the interest of tourists in the specific tourist products and services they offer.

The tourist experience is the goal of the tourist's search for authenticity, which can not be found in his daily activities and which tourist destinations can provide.

Thus, the first step in the preparation of this study is to process and analyze all relevant information about key *concepts*:

Term	Definition
Christian legacy	The term "Christian heritage" means all religious sites such as cathedrals, temples and mosques located in a certain area, which attract a large number of visitors around the world, not only because of their spiritual value but also for recreational, educational and cultural purposes. (Woodward, 2004).
Culture	Culture is the set of material and spiritual values created by mankind and the institutions necessary for the communication of these values. The term "culture" comes from Latin and means land cultivation, ad litteram - "cultura animi"- lat. cultivation of the soul. In sociology, culture is any way of thinking, behaviour, or production, passed from one generation to another by any non-genetic means.
Religious tourism	Religious tourism can be determined by visiting sacred places to participate in or following religious ceremonies and worship. Religious tourism largely covers tourist trips to fulfil religious beliefs and/or to explore the centres of attraction of faith in the assessment of the tourist phenomenon (Heidari et al., 2017).
Cross-border area	Cross-border cooperation (cross-border areas) is more or less institutionalised cooperation between close sub-national authorities across national borders. European cross-border cooperation aims to respond to common challenges identified together in border areas and to exploit the untapped growth potential of border areas, developing the cooperation process for the harmonious development of the whole Union.
Euroregion	Euroregions are permanent structures for cross-border cooperation between regional and local authorities in the immediate vicinity, located on both sides of the common state borders. Euroregions and similar structures are neither a new administration nor a new level of governance, but a platform for horizontal cross-border exchanges and cooperation between local and regional authorities; they





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### European Territorial Cooperation (ETC)

also promote closer vertical cooperation between regional and local authorities, national governments and the European institutions<sup>1</sup>;

For the 2014-2020 programming period, for the first time in the history of European cohesion policy, a specific regulation on cooperation actions supported by the European Cohesion Fund Regional Development (ERDF) was adopted. European territorial cooperation is the cohesion policy instrument aimed at solving cross-border problems that require common solutions and joint development of the potential of different territories.

### 1.1.2. Coordinates the legislative and programming framework in the field of cross-border tourism

The **Interreg EUROPE** programme aims to improve the implementation of regional development policies and programmes, mainly for those seeking investment for growth and jobs and, where appropriate, for European territorial cooperation, by promoting the exchange of experience and the study of new policies by actors of regional interest.

The programme had a budget of EUR 359 million, financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), for the period 2014-2020, of which: EUR 322.4 million was for interregional cooperation projects implemented by the EU partners.

Project co-financing represented 85% of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for public institutions and bodies governed by public law in the 28 EU Member States, and 75% for private non-profit organisations in the 28 countries. In the EU Member States, 50% of Norwegian funding is for public authorities governed by public law and private non-profit organisations in Norway. The programme is active in 30 countries: the 28 Member States of the European Union, Switzerland and Norway.

The operational programme allows for two types of actions:

1. **"Interregional cooperation projects"**, in which public organisations in different regions of Europe work together for 3 to 5 years on a common political issue, ensuring that lessons learned from cooperation are applied in practice. To strengthen the results-oriented approach and give the learning process a better chance of delivering tangible results, the project of interregional cooperation is developed in two phases:
  - **'Phase 1'**, is dedicated to interregional training and preparation for the implementation of lessons learned from cooperation by developing an action plan; the Action Plan is a document detailing how lessons learned from cooperation will be applied to improve the policy instrument addressed in this region;
  - **'Phase 2'** is dedicated to monitoring the implementation of each action plan. Pilot projects may also be carried out at this stage if necessary.

<sup>1</sup> Official Journal of the European Union, Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on "Euroregions" (2007/C 256/23), available on <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:256:0131:0137:RO:PDF> consulted on 01.09.2021



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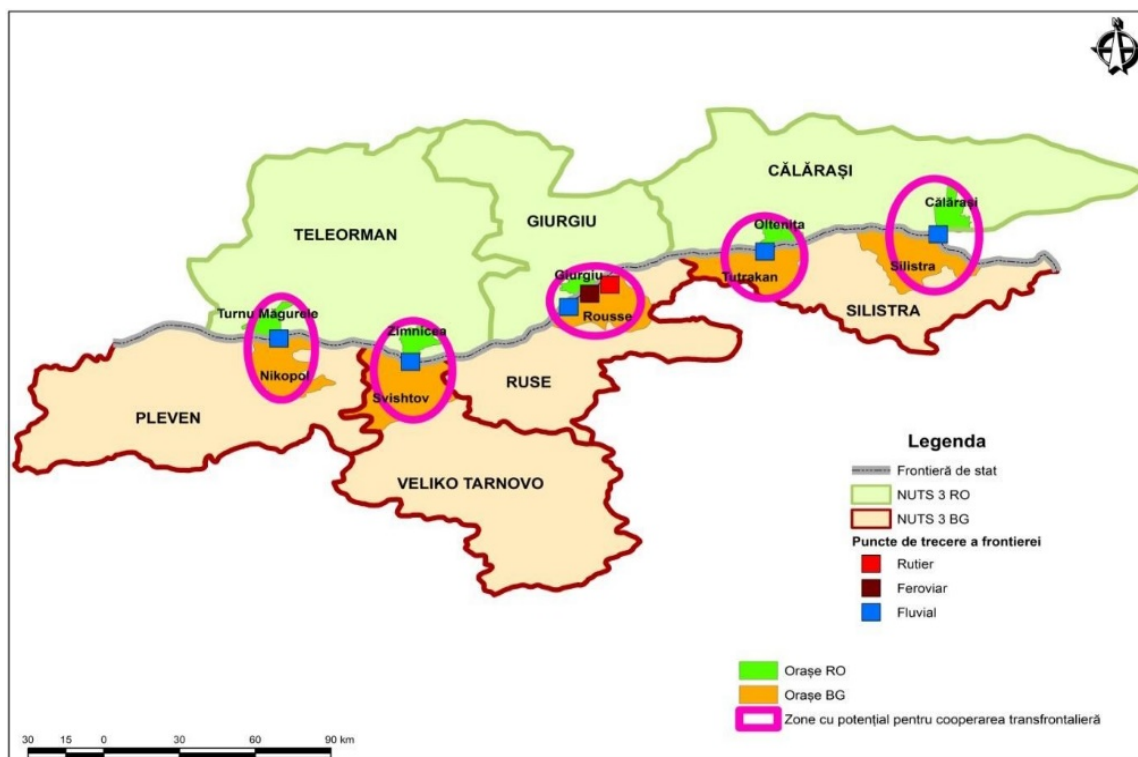
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2. **Policy Training Platforms**, a tool for better and faster knowledge sharing that helps policymakers in their work. The Policy Learning Platform is a service for all project partners and all other actors implementing regional policies in Europe, a service to promote continuous policy study and benefit from good regional policy practices;

Under the **INTERREG V-A ROMANIA-BULGARIA programme 2014-2020** the eligible areas were represented by:

- Romania Seven districts: Mehedinți, Dolj, Olt, Teleorman, **Giurgiu**, Călărași, Constanța;
- Bulgaria - eight districts: Vidin, Vratsa, Montana, Plevna, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse, Silistra, Dobrich.



**Figure1: Administrative map of the cross-border area**

Source: Urban Development Study in South Muntenia Region - current state and development scenarios for the period 2014-2020

The programme addresses the following five priorities:

- ❖ a well-connected region;
- ❖ green region;
- ❖ the region is safe;
- ❖ a specialised and inclusive region;
- ❖ effective region.



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Also, specific to the Ruse-Giurgiu Euroregion, we mention the SUERD instrument, a Community instrument for macro-regional cooperation of the Danube states, intended for the economic and social development of the Danube macro-region, by strengthening the implementation of the EU policies and legislation.

Under this strategy, 12 districts from Romania are eligible: Karas Severin, Mehedintsi, Dolj, Ult, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Călărași, Yalomitsa, Brăila, Galati, Tulcea and Constanta.

SUERD brings together 9 EU Member States (Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Hungary) and 5 non-EU countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine).

The strategy was developed by the European Commission in 2010 based on the contribution of coastal countries.

The main benefits that the SUERD strategy brings to eligible countries are:

- *Development of quality of life by increasing the competitiveness and attractiveness of Danube areas;*
- *Obtaining economic benefits through the conclusion of business partnerships and cooperation between the public and private sectors;*
- *Attracting investment in strategic areas such as transport infrastructure, environment and energy;*
- *Engaging Romanian decision-makers in a new format of transnational cooperation that will generate a transfer of expertise and competencies at the level of local administration;*
- *Contribution to increasing the absorption capacity of structural and investment funds belonging to Romania.*

Analyzing the Giurgiu County Development Strategy for the period 2021 - 2027, in the District Development Measures Plan 2021-2027, we note that capitalising on cross-border cooperation is a priority for development, with one of the priorities being the identification, development and maintenance of partnerships and networks with stakeholders to attract resources for the development of the district through the Romania-Bulgaria 2021-2027 Cross-Border Cooperation Programme.

From 2014-to 2020 we retain a relevant project proposed by the Municipality of Giurgiu, namely the arrangement of campsites in the area of <sup>2</sup> Mitnitsa Giurgiu, a project related to sector objective A1: Support for sustainable economic development, Area of intervention: tourist infrastructure, which indicates the existence of a public administration for cross-border cooperation.

At the level of the Ruse region, the strategy for integrated development of the tourism sector in the period 2014-2020 concerned, first and foremost, the development of tourist infrastructure - the creation of a panoramic road along the Danube River, the creation of a bike lane, the development of suburban areas such as recreation spaces, artistic lighting of the Friendship Bridge (which unites

<sup>2</sup>[http://www.primariagiurgiu.ro/portal/giurgiu/primarie/portal.nsf/0/E9055CB2A21FD473C225801A004789E6/\\$FILE/2016,08.27%20SIDU%20GIURGIU%20v3.1.pdf](http://www.primariagiurgiu.ro/portal/giurgiu/primarie/portal.nsf/0/E9055CB2A21FD473C225801A004789E6/$FILE/2016,08.27%20SIDU%20GIURGIU%20v3.1.pdf)



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Bulgaria and Romania), but also the promotion of local traditions and customs through cultural events and the development of hunting tourism.<sup>3</sup>

## 1.2. The modern context of cultural and religious tourism in the Ruse-Giurgiu cross-border area

The main objective of the survey is to identify three integrated cross-border tourist products, which will include tourist routes designed to increase the number of tourists visiting the Ruse-Giurgiu area. Petka/Paraskeva (Ruse, Bulgaria), St. Panteleimon Church (Giurgiu, Romania) and the Church of St. Georgi (Ruse, Bulgaria).

This border region between Romania and Bulgaria, through the two regions, creates a common area for cooperation, cooperation and development, from which both regions benefit equally, benefiting from many common elements, both geographical and historical, but also cultural, expressed in the following chapters of this study.



**Figure 2: Ruse-Giurgiu Euroregion**

Source and copyright: Researchgate.net

The Ruse-Giurgiu Region is distinguished by its cultural heritage, nature reserves and cultural events, which aim to attract more tourists from year to year. Compared to previous years, the interest of tourists in the Euroregion has increased, registering significant increases in terms of the number of nights spent, but also in the number of accommodations available, both in Giurgiu County and the use region, an analysis in this case which means that it is done

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.strategy.bg/StrategicDocuments/View.aspx?lang=bg-BG&Id=1013>



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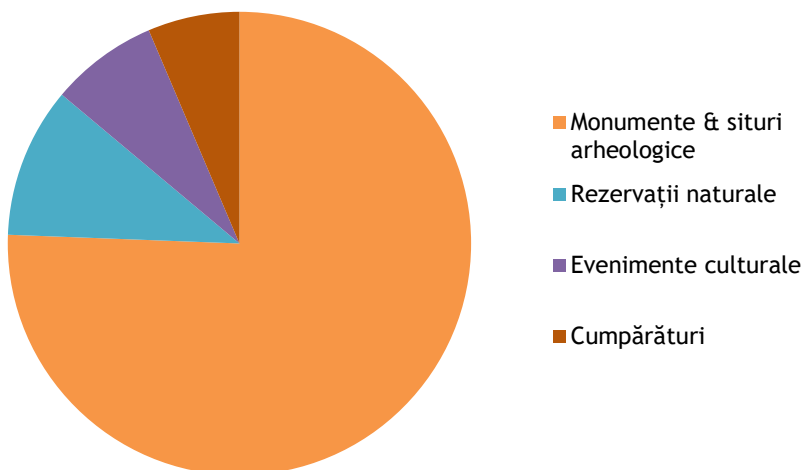


in this <sup>4</sup>study, in sub-heading 2.3. Trends in tourist demand and supply - tourist potential in Giurgiu County, Romania and sub-heading 2.4. Trends in tourist supply and demand - tourist potential in Ruse region, Bulgaria.<sup>5</sup>

This is due to investments, projects and funds dedicated to the growth, development and promotion of the area.

A survey conducted under the Programme 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Romania - Bulgaria shows that:

- ✚ 75.6% of tourists who visited the Cross-Border Region of Ruse - Giurgiu aimed to visit cultural and historical heritage sites
- ✚ 10.5% visited nature reserves
- ✚ 7.5% of tourists come for cultural events such as Music Days in Ruse, theatrical performances or concerts
- ✚ 6.4% of tourists chose the shopping destination.<sup>6</sup>



Monuments and archaeological sites, Nature Reserves, Cultural Events, Shopping

**Figure 3: Presentation of the main tourist destinations of tourists in the Ruse-Giurgiu Euroregion**

Source: Study of Christian Heritage along the Ruse-Giurgiu Cultural Corridor,  
<https://keep.eu/projects/21297/The-Christian-heritage-alon-EN>

Although tourism in the Euroregion is on an upward trend, a less popular segment of the tourism market with significant exploitation opportunities is **religious cultural tourism**.

<sup>4</sup> MONITORSTAT, National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria, information at <https://www.nsi.bg/en/>, accessed on 11.08.2021

<sup>5</sup> The Romanian National Statistical Institute, information is available <https://giurgiu.insse.ro/>, consulted on 11.08.2021.

<sup>6</sup> Exploration, The Christian Heritage along the Ruse-Giurgiu Cultural Corridor, available <https://keep.eu/projects/21297/The-Christian-heritage-alon-EN/>, available on 12.08.2021.



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The link between tourism and spirituality has become widespread and popularized in recent decades internationally.

Today's religious tourism includes a high level of education and a degree of culture from tourists, which allows the assessment of cultural and religious goals in terms of architecture, construction, value, and spiritual significance.

The idea of religion, referring to tourism, was developed by understanding the motives of tourists. The difference between this form of tourism and others is the religious motivation of tourists.

The forms of expression of religious tourism are diverse:

- ✚ visits to the holy places;
- ✚ religious worships;
- ✚ religious camps for young people.

Based on the concept of **cultural and religious tourism**, we can talk about two main trends in travel:

- **A one-off trip that has a single purpose of a religious nature - religious trips to places with miraculous icons. The participant in this kind of journey is called a pilgrim.**
- **A multifunctional trip that combines the religious aspects of travel with cultural ones that allow you to visit a larger number of tourist attractions.**

When the element of attraction for tourists is in a monument or other form of the cultural heritage of a religious nature, we can talk about tourism in a religious space.

In both Giurgiu County and Ruse region numerous cult places are impressed with their antiquity, architectural style and history.

In addition, the Ruse-Giurgiu Euroregion is considered an area of spiritual importance due to the cultural and religious importance of St. Paraskeva (St. Petka), St. George and St. Panteleimon for the cross-border corridor Ruse-Giurgiu.<sup>7</sup>

Currently, tourism in the Euroregion promotes only some of the most famous tourist attractions in the Ruse-Giurgiu region.

At the Giurgiu district level, a *cultural route* organized in the form of a one-day route has been identified, having as its starting point: Ruse - Giurgiu, intermediate destinations: Fragments of the wall of the Turkish fortress of Tabia - Giurgiu and final point: Ruse - Giurgiu. The visit to any place of worship is not included in the route.

Also, within the framework of the LIME S project - 15.2.1.067 - Development and promotion of an integrated tourist product and cultural heritage: The route "Romanian border within the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region" was included in the tourist route Museum of Theohari Antonescu District.

<sup>7</sup> Exploration, The Christian Heritage along the Ruse-Giurgiu Cultural Corridor, available <https://keep.eu/projects/21297/The-Christian-heritage-alon-EN/>, available on 28.08.2021.



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Within the framework of the same project are included the following cultural and tourist goals for the Ruse region: the Ancient Fortress "Sexagingta Prista"; Regional History Museum; Ancient and medieval settlement "Yarus", Krivina; Red Fortress.

The huge potential of the Euroregion from a cultural and religious point of view is a driver for the local economy and tourism.

Given the above, the need to include elements of religious heritage and promote them is becoming increasingly apparent.

Therefore, by creating pilgrimage routes, excursions and tours, which also include goals less known to the general public, you may try to raise the population's awareness of the religious importance of the area. At the same time, the inclusion of several components of religious heritage will contribute to increasing the diversity of the existing tourist proposal, maintaining the integrity of the objectives and preserving them, not least promoting local culture.

\*\*\*

## Chapter 2. Professional and cultural and religious tourist potential in the cross-border area Ruse-Giurgiu

### 2.1. Identify existing forms of tourism, including area-specific routes

In recent years, an attempt has been made to redirect the resources available from Bulgaria to promote local tourism, especially in the coastal Danube zone in Ruse Region. development of cross-border cooperation and the creation of common tourism products. Since then, more than 15 different areas of development, including tourism, have been covered.

Analyzing the tourism-related projects implemented in the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming periods:

- ✚ 43 projects aimed at **supporting cultural tourism**
- ✚ 26 projects aimed at sustainable tourism
- ✚ 16 projects focused on sustainable tourism and ecotourism

The projects aimed at alternative, thematic, sports, religious, event and adventure tourism benefited from 2 projects for each category during the specified periods.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Maria STANKOVA Southwestern University "Neofit Rilski" - Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, Svetoslav KALEYCHEV University of World and National Economy, Sofia, Bulgaria, REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY IN TOURISM: IMPLEMENTATION OF CROSS-BORDER PARTNERSHIP, AVAILABLE in English consult <http://www.um.ase.ro/no153/3.pdf> ed on 11.08.2021. G.



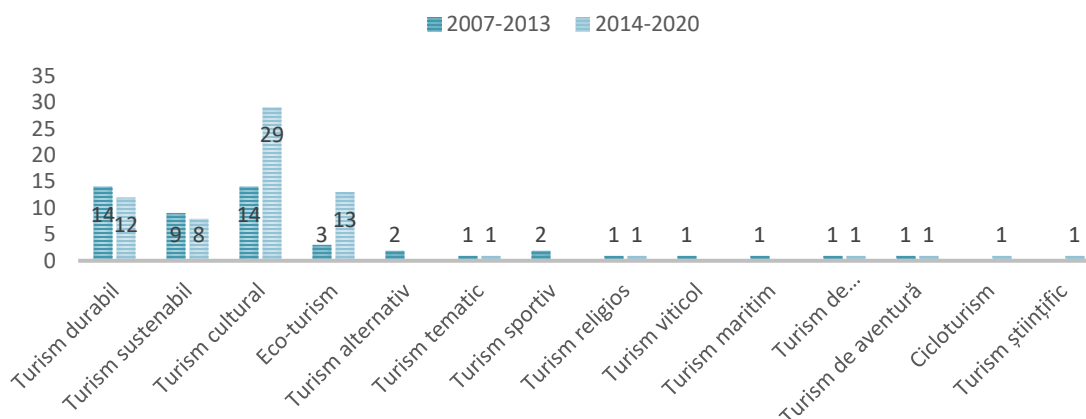
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Tourism durabil=	Long-term tourism
Turism sustenabil=	Sustainable tourism
Turism cultural=	Cultural tourism
Eco-turism=	Ecotourism =
Turism alternativ=	Alternative tourism
Turism tematic=	Thematic tourism=
Turism sportiv=	Sports tourism =
Turism religios=	Religious tourism =
Turism viticol=	Wine tourism =
Turism maritim=	Maritime tourism =
Turism de...=	Tourism of... =
Turism de aventură=	Adventure tourism=
Cicloturism=	Cyclingtourism =
Turism științific=	Scientific tourism =

**Figure 4: Graphical representation of the main tourism sectors and the projects implemented there, Ruse-Giurgiu Euroregion**

Source: Document Regional sustainability in tourism: Implementation of cross-border partnerships



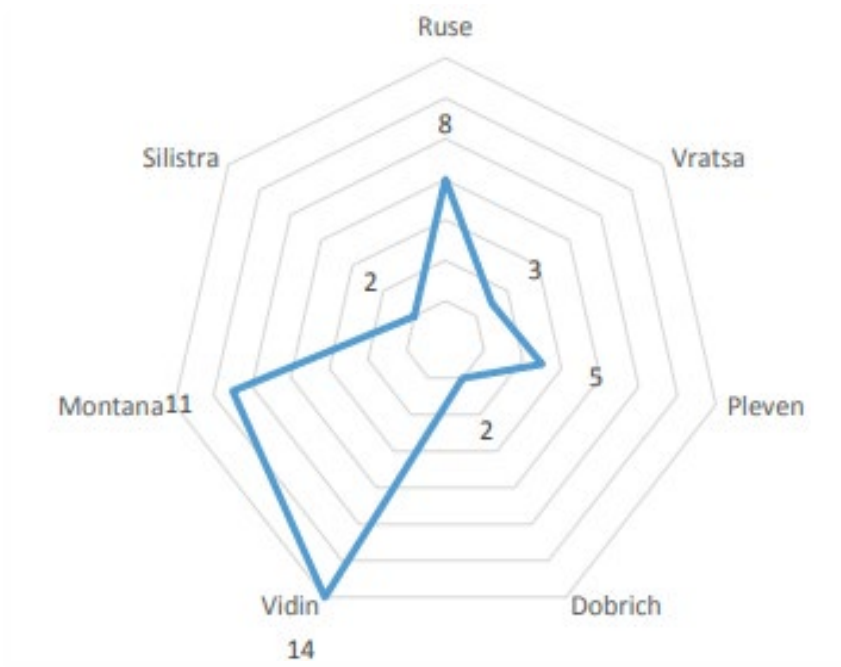
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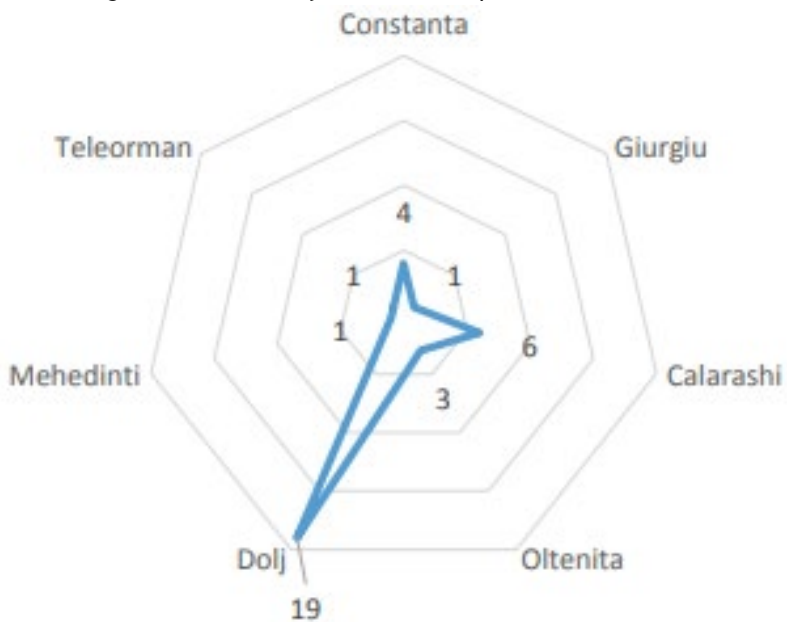
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Ruse, Vratsa, Plevna, Dobrich, Vidin, Montana, Silistra  
Ruse, Vratsa, Plevna, Dobrich, Vidin, Montana, Silistra

**Figure 5: Allocation of projects completed in the period 2014-2020 under the INTERREG V-A RO-BG Programme**

Source: Document Regional sustainability in tourism: Implementation of cross-border partnerships



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Constanța, Giurgiu, Călărași, Oltenița, Dolj, Mehedinți, Teleorman  
Constanta, Giurgiu, Călărași, Oltenica, Dolj, Mehedintsi, Teleorman

**Figure 6: Allocation of finalised projects in the period 2014-2020 under the INTERREG V-A RO-BG Programme**

Source: Document Regional sustainability in tourism: Implementation of cross-border partnerships

At **Giurgiu and Ruse district level**, the main forms of tourism, together with tourist purposes and representative events for them, are as follows:

#### **Cultural tourism**

Cultural tourism is another component of sustainable tourism that focuses on traditional local communities that have a variety of customs, rare forms of art and different social traditions that differ from other forms of culture.

This is a form of tourism that can develop in both urban and rural areas, attracting different categories of tourists;

Among the forms of cultural tourism are:

- visit to historical heritage sites: archaeological, historical remains, monuments, castles, religious buildings, urban and rural ensembles, parks and gardens;
- visit museums: art galleries, archaeology, history, natural, specialized or thematic sciences, national or regional, botanical gardens, zoos;
- participation in cultural events: opera, ballet, theatre, concerts, music festivals, dance, film, folk, traditional holidays, exhibitions, fairs;
- Industrial and technical tourism, located in the opinion of specialists, between cultural and business, is characterized by a visit to economic (industrial) sites, specific structures (dams, viaducts, bridges, tunnels, canals), urban architectural ensembles - modern or traditional, knowledge of the social organization, etc.;
- □ Among the established forms of cultural tourism are **religious tourism**, scientific, speleological tourism, etc.

The belonging of this form of tourism to the category of sustainable tourism stems from the fact that through its characteristics it has a positive economic and social impact, contributes to the preservation of the heritage and cultural heritage of a destination, and contributes to the satisfaction of the cultural needs of a destination. tourists and providing authentic experiences supports culture and helps the development of tourism in regions that have no other goals.

Among the most well-developed tourism industries in the Giurgiu, region is cultural tourism. Giurgiu has a rich cultural heritage. Over time, important networks and cultural institutions were established in Giurgiu. The cultural activity of Giurgiu County takes place in the following cultural institutions:



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### ➤ ***Clock Tower***

The Clock Tower is one of the most important tourist attractions in Giurgiu, as a monument that began during the Ottoman occupation. With a height of 22 meters, the tower was built to observe the surroundings. Over time, the building was rehabilitated, and in 2005-2007 the old clock was moved to the Historical Museum in Giurgiu and replaced with a new one.

### ➤ ***Theohari Antonescu District Museum.***

Founded in 1934, the museum has sections such as archaeology, ethnography, fine art, numismatics and memorial history, rare books and bibliophile assets. The most important section is ethnography, which houses a permanent exposition of about 1600 exhibits representing Vlaschansk village folklore life and culture.

### ➤ ***Episcopal Museum of Giurgiu***

The Episcopal Museum of Giurgiu is an important historical resource that highlights the role of Christianity in the history of the Roman people. The museum is designed for people who want to admire the many works of art and discover the roots of Orthodoxy.

### ➤ ***Border Police Museum (specific to military history)***

Founded in 2002, on the occasion of the 138th anniversary of the institutional existence of border police and as a one-of-a-kind museum in Romania, the Border Police Museum has six exhibition halls and a performance hall. The six halls display border uniforms, international ceremonial uniforms from Bulgaria, Ukraine, Turkey, Germany, Spain, Austria, France, Italy and Norway, as well as paintings and sculptures.

### ➤ ***Tudor Vianu Theatre (Wallach Giurgiu Theatre)***

Opened in 1966, Tudor Vianu Theatre is an important international artistic landmark that collaborates with some of the largest artists and theatre troupes. After the rehabilitation of the space in 2016, the theatre has a Small Hall with 78 seats, a Large Hall with 400 seats and a Studio Hall with 80 seats.

### ➤ ***Yoon Vina House of Culture.***

Home of Culture "Ion Vina" is the main cultural centre that deals with the creation, support and promotion of events such as festivals, concerts and competitions.

Other cultural centres in Giurgiu are:

- *House of Culture of Border Police*
- *Ateneum "Nicolae Balanescu".*
- *Victor Karpis School of Arts and Music (within which there is a National University and a Zono methodological centre for adult learning)*
- *27 Philharmonic Orchestra*
- *Students' Palace<sup>9</sup>*

<sup>9</sup> Article, Attractions and Tourist Attractions in Giurgiu, available on <https://romtur.ro/obiective-turistice-giurgiu/>, consulted on 28.08.2021



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In the Ruse region, cultural heritage ranges from historic buildings with Baroque architectural elements with German and Austrian influence to over 30 protected archaeological sites, museum networks and theatres.

In terms of tourist potential, many of the cultural heritage sites are protected and in good condition, but not in all cases their current condition (physical condition, exposure, functional use, accessibility, provision of accompanying tourist services) allows the optimal realization of this potential.

➤ ***Drama Theatre "Sava Ognyanov".***

Since then, famous actors have made the theatre an honourable image well known to the general public.

➤ ***Regional History Museum***

The Regional Museum of History in Ruse operates in the oldest building in the region, dating back to 1882.

➤ ***Pantheon of Bulgarian National Heroes***

Open to the public since 1978, the Pantheon of National Heroes is a Bulgarian national monument and social. There are buried remains of 39 famous Bulgarians, among them: Lyuben Karavelov, Zahari Stoyanov, Stefan Karadzha, Panayot Hitov, Tonka Obrenova, Nikola Obretenov, Panayot Volov, Angel Kanchev, etc.; another 453 revolutionaries were also honoured by writing their names in the Pantheon. In the middle under the gilded dome, an eternal fire burns. The Pantheon is in the ranking of 100 tourist sites in Bulgaria.

➤ ***Village at Selo Izitz***

The village of Istz is 30 km east of Ruse. There is an old settlement spread over two hills, which plays a strategic role in the area in the XIII-XIV century. 1.4 km from the centre of the village, on rocky terrain surrounded by the gorge of the Rusenski Lom River, are located the Thracian, ancient and medieval fortress "Little Gradishte" or "Bulgarian Gradishte". The Great Settlement.

➤ ***Museum of Ecology with Aquarium***

The Museum of Aquarium Ecology is housed in a cultural building built in the early 20th century. The museum was opened on September 28, 2014. The museum also stores a rich collection of fossils, and dioramas representing different types of living creatures in their real environment, but also a model of the woolly mammoth in real size.<sup>10</sup>

About *cultural events*, various competitions, festivals and concerts are organized in Giurgiu, among which we mention:

➤ ***"On the edge of the Danube"***

"On the Edge of the Danube" is a popular music festival, held in the form of a competition, in which a large number of vocal soloists, but also instrumentalists, from almost all folklore regions of the country, participate.

<sup>10</sup> Article, Attractions and Tourist Attractions in Ruse, available on <https://www.infotour.ro/ghid-turistic/bulgaria/ruse/obiective-turistice/>, reviewed on 18.08.2021



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### ➤ **"Giurgiu Municipality Days"**

This event includes many cultural and artistic events that take place within a few days. Among the events, there are musical, dance and theatrical performances in the Ateneum "Nicolae Ballanescu".

### ➤ **"Cultural Spring of Giurgiu"**

"Cultural Spring of Giurgiu" includes events such as a concert of the Wallachia Spirit Orchestra, a choreographic moment, four theatrical dinners, an interreligious festival for choral music with international participation, a national competition for fine arts, a national dance festival for modern and aerobics for children and youth and the launch of a book.

**Cultural events also occupy an important place in the economy of the Ruse region. Every year many concerts, festivals and competitions with international openings are organized.**

### ➤ **Ruse Carnival**

Every year at the height of summer, the main square of Ruse becomes a carnival stage. The event delivers joy to young and old, preserving the long tradition of entertainment through fun games, costumes, attractive shows, a fire show and many interesting characters.

### ➤ **International competition „Northern Lights"**

"Northern Lights" is a competition for light music, created in 1966. Since then, participants from Russia, Romania, Montenegro and Kosovo have appeared on the Northern Lights stage, establishing it as an international competition. Since 2006, the international competition "Northern Lights" has been organized by the vocal studio for pop and jazz "Ikonov" and "Northern Lights" Association, with the support of the Rousse Municipality. Since 2014, the municipal youth house - Ruse has been involved in organizing and holding the competition.

### ➤ **Music days in March**

Music days in March is an annual event that offers lovers of classical music, jazz, dance, pop and others, live concerts by international and nationally renowned performers.

### ➤ **National Student Theatre Festival "Kliment Mihaylov".**

The main goal of the National Student Theatre Festival "Kliment Mihaylov" is to turn Ruse into a large stage, where young people keen on the theatre have the opportunity to demonstrate their talents and artistic abilities in noble competition. The festival has a competitive character.

Other festivals and competitions held in the Ruse region are:

- *Youth Festival of Folk Art "Severina".*
- *National Choral Meeting*
- *International Dance Festival „Dancing River"*
- *Danube Rock Fest*
- *Sports Dance Tournament*



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- **Mega marathon ZUMBA (R) Fitness**
- **Salsa Weekend.**

## **Ecotourism**

Ecotourism is one of the most important forms of sustainable tourism, according to specialists, representing a *form of tourism that respects the principles of sustainable tourism in terms of economic, social and environmental impact, but also includes several specific principles that distinguish it:*

- ◆ actively contributes to the preservation of natural and cultural heritage;
- ◆ involve local communities in planning, development and exploitation activities and contribute to their well-being;
- ◆ includes the interpretation of the destination's natural and cultural heritage for visitors;
- ◆ intended for individual visitors in particular, but also small organised groups.

Ecotourism is not a very developed tourism industry in Giurgiu County. Although the Danube region has important tourist potential, nature reserves and forests do not have enough tourist or leisure facilities.

On the territory of Giurgiu County, there is 1067 ha of forests, creating a single tourist organization, namely a children's camp. Bulanu Forests (72 ha), Gutsu (169 ha) and Turbatu (289 ha) can perform recreational and agreement functions.

Ruse Region enjoys a variety of nature reserves and protected areas. Compared to Giurgiu, ecotourism in this area is better developed and continues to grow. The infrastructure to the main sites included in the ecotourism segment is good and their potential has been exploited.

### ➤ **Rusenski Lom Nature Park**

Rusenski Lom Nature Park was declared a protected area in 1970 and covers the valleys of the Rusenski Lom rivers - the last tributary of the right bank of the Danube and its tributary between the villages of Podenica, Pislov, Koshov and Ivanovo. Its area is 3408 hectares, including rocks, forests, rivers, caves and orchards. Biodiversity, landscape, and unique cultural and historical heritage make the park an attractive centre for the development of domestic and international tourism, recreational use and development of research.<sup>11</sup>

### ➤ **Ivanovo Rock Churches**

Ivanovo () is a village in Northeastern Bulgaria, located 14 mi away. from the town of Giurgiu, on the rocky banks of the Rusenski Lom River, near which there are numerous monolithic cave chapels and monasteries dug into the rock. Ivanovo rock churches were listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979 and stand out for their well-preserved medieval frescoes.

The Ivanovo Ensemble consists of 40 churches and about 300 other rooms carved into the rock or dwellings in caves. Among them are several churches that can still be visited today, with frescoes dating back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries:

<sup>11</sup> ditto



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- The buried church (Archangel Michael), has some of the best-preserved frescoes throughout the complex.
- The Church of the Virgin Mary, among the paintings of which there is a variant of the "Last Supper", which is supposed to have been painted 150 years before that of Leonardo da Vinci.

The ensemble also contains other churches that can be visited, among which we mention: The chapel of Lord Dole, Baptist Church, Broken Church (St. Theodore's) and the Main Church.<sup>12</sup>

➤ ***Rock Monastery "Dimitar Basarbovski".***

The Basarbovo Monastery has spiritual patrons Saint Theodore Tyrone and St. Theodore Stratilat. The monastery was founded by Queen Teodora, The first wife of the Bulgarian tsar John Alexander and the daughter of the Wallachia voivode Basarab I, founder of the first dynasty of the Principality of Vlachia. Paisii Hilendarski - the author of "Slavyanobolgarska History ".<sup>13</sup>

➤ ***Monastery of Sveta Marina***

The Monastery of St. Marina is located near the village of Karan Verbovka and is one of the oldest Bulgarian monasteries, established in the Second Bulgarian Kingdom. After the fall of Bulgaria under Ottoman rule, the authorities and torture of monks and Christians began. The monastery was burned down and torn down, levelled with the earth, a fate that other famous Bulgarian altars had, but the name of St. Marina remained forever in the minds of the people. He rushed into the water and, after washing his face, regained his sight . who works miracles with this water. An old priest gladly replied to the father that he had heard from the old clerics that this place was the place where the name of St. Great Martyr Marina was honoured, that the name of The Holy Martyr Marina would be found, and that the name of The Ayazmo (the source of healing holy water) would be found. To express his appreciation for St. Marina, the gentile gave his levels with the ayazmo, vowing that when other sick people arrived there, it would be a place where they could spend the night.<sup>14</sup>

➤ ***Fishponds near the village of Mechka***

The fish ponds near Selo Bear are an ornithologically important place and nesting place for over 177 bird species, of which 62 are included in the Red Book of Bulgaria.

➤ ***„Dekilitash”***

" Dekilitash " is a natural site located 30-40 meters from the Danube River. The object is composed of two large stones dating back to the Mesozoic era. The legend of the place tells that a young man from the Bulgarian folklore tradition, Krali Marko, lifted the two stones with his little finger, symbolizing strength and bravery.

<sup>12</sup> "The common strategy for the preservation and sharing of cultural, religious and historical heritage as a basis for the sustainable development of the joint activities of religious (pilgrimage) and cultural tourism in a cross-border 2015 region Ruse-Giurgiu", available in Romanian language on <http://christ-ro-bg.eu> consulted on 01.09.2021, pp. 14-15

<sup>13</sup> Ithe

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 16



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### ➤ **"The Drilled Stone"**

1.2 mi from the village of Pisantes is the "Drilled Stone" on the edge of a cliff at the edge of the Mounds Forest. Below it is the Kamberica River, and about 50 meters in a straight line is Kazan rock ("The culmination of punishment "). The perforated stone is a circular vertical opening, dug into a horizontal scale, with a correct shape and diameter of 1 m, a depth of 142 cm from the ground. According to the researchers, the stone is a cult object from the period of Bulgarian paganism. Also interesting are the sheer rock Mamula to the lake and the Great Cave, which are within walking distance.

### **Religious tourism**

Religious tourism is a type of tourism, in which tourists are motivated to practice in places based on faith and is also called religious tourism or spiritual tourism. This is a type of tourism where people travel individually or in groups for worship, missionary, or entertainment purposes. It can be divided into two main types related to tourists who are interested in participating in pilgrimages and tourists who want to gain knowledge of religious products and participate in places related to the faith. In the case of this study, we are treated with a preference for the second mentioned category.

Giurgiu County has great tourist potential in terms of religious tourism, given the history and diversity of the area. In Giurgiu, most places of worship are those belonging to the Romanian Orthodox Church, respectively:

#### ➤ ***Episcopal Cathedral - "Assumption of the Virgin Mary"***

The Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, built in its current form between 1840-and 1852, is one of the most visited tourist attractions in Giurgiu. The cathedral was built on the ruins of an old underground church during Ottoman rule and marks the liberation of the Romanian people.

#### ➤ ***Annunciation Church***

The Church of the Annunciation, also called the "Youth" Church, is one of the most important religious destinations in Giurgiu because inside it is still stored the original paintings of the famous artist Georgi Tatarascu. The paintings were made between 1866 and 1867 with oil technique, an aspect that gives uniqueness to the Church.

#### ➤ ***Ascension of the Lord Church***

The Ascension of the Lord Church, also known as the Church of heroes, is one of the most recognizable places of worship in Giurgiu due to the high tower at the entrance. Built between 1926 and 1938, the church is a religious monument dedicated to the fallen heroes of the First World War and preserves a large number of old icons and paintings.

Other important Churches and Monasteries are:

- *St. George's Church*
- *St. Haralambi Church*
- *Holy Trinity Smarda Church*
- *St. George Novi Church*



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- *St. Mary's Church*
- *Church of the Holy Martyrs of Brankovini*
- *St. Nicholas Hermitage*
- *Monastery "St. Veliko Martyr Georgi".*

In addition to the mentioned destinations, there are other places of worship, less popular and known to the public. Thus, there is a need to integrate them into the market for cultural and religious tourism to preserve the elements of religious heritage.

Religious tourism is a less developed part of the Ruse region. However, there is significant tourist potential in terms of the development of this segment. Local history, as well as the elements of the rich religious heritage, help to promote this kind of tourism in Ruse.

- *Monastery "St. Dimitar Bassarabovski "*

The Basarabovski Monastery is an important rock centre for the common history of Romania and Bulgaria. The legend that made the monastery famous tells that St. Dimitar Basarabowski led a mobile life on the rocks of the monastery, and after his death, his relics remained in the monastery. He was sent to Russia. At the same time, a great plague outbreak erupted. When the relics arrived in Bucharest, it was said that people miraculously began to heal and asked to stay there.

- *Holy Trinity Cathedral*

*Holy Trinity Cathedral* was built in 1632 and is the oldest in Ruse. The church has a courtyard and is composed of an underground structure dating back to the 5th century, from the time of the Ottoman occupation, when Orthodox temples could not be built from the outside.

### **Cycling tourism**

The increasing use of the bicycle has led to its evolution from a simple mode of transport to a means of recreation and sport. At the European and international level, cycling is gaining more and more popularity, becoming a contributing factor to the development of tourism and a preferred means of movement for people who want to explore a particular area and come into direct contact with nature. More and more tourists are choosing their bikes in their holiday destinations, enjoying the experiences outside overcrowded areas.

At the Giurgiu county level, local NGOs organize bike routes on routes such as Bolintin Valle-Bukshani-Krzensznyi-Bulbukata or Comana Nature Park.

The diversity of the ecosystem, embossed forms and heritage in the Ruse region favours the development of cycling tourism. Still, at an early stage of development in this segment of the tourist market, the Ruse region has a bike path that connects the municipalities of Pisanets and Vetovo.

- The ecological track has a length of 14 km, during which there are places for recreation and shelter. The track connects the village of Pisanets and the town of Vetovo and was built under the project "Ecotourism - perspective for the development of two small municipalities" within the framework of the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013.



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## 2.2. Presentation of the Ruse-Giurgiu cultural corridor in terms of cultural and religious heritage

### 2.2.1. The cultural and religious heritage of the cross-border region of Ruse-Giurgiu

Separated by the Danube River, Giurgiu County and the Ruse region border the border at a distance of about 14 km. The two regions share significant geographical characteristics, both of which have a large area covered by plains. Most of the geography of Giurgiu county is dominated by the plains that are part of the Romanian Plain (RO-GEO.RO, \*), and the situation of the Ruse region is similar, its territory is crossed by the Danube Plain to the north (Collective, 2002).

#### Giurgiu County - Brief presentation


Giurgiu County has relief formed by the Danube Meadow in the southern part of the border with Bulgaria and the Romanian plain with an altitude of no more than 100-200 meters. The climate in Giurgiu County is a temperate continental plain with very hot summers and cold winters, with temperature differences very large.

The average annual temperature is 11-12° C, and precipitation decreases by about 500-600 mm per year. The Danube river is the main water flow of the district, followed by the rivers Arges, Dumbovița and Nelov.

The largest and most important lake is Lake Comana, an important fish reserve.

The territory of Giurgiu County is rich in numerous churches and monasteries, and their promotion can make the southern district a popular destination for tourists, lovers of cultural and historical tourism and tourists-pilgrims. In Giurgiu County, 540 historical sites have been registered as part of the cultural heritage. They are registered with the National Institute of Romanian Heritage, at the Ministry of Culture. The respective objectives are located in the urban and rural areas of the district. Of these, 112 are religious Christian temples, of which 20 are of national importance, some church temples and monasteries are impressive for their architecture, painting and historical significance. Some of them are among the most impressive buildings in all of Romania. Due to their unique archaeological and ethnographic exhibits, they are part of the national cultural, historical and religious heritage of Romania.<sup>15</sup>

Some of the most significant sites of cultural, historical and religious heritage in Giurgiu are:

-  **Comana Monastery** - located in Comana municipality, this is a place of worship built by the ruler Vlad Tsepesh in 1461 on an island surrounded at that time by marshes. In the form of a straight quadrilateral, with external walls and five towers protruding from firewalls, in the fenced space and erecting a church with the patron Saint Nicholas. Inside, it was plastered and painted, outside surrounded by the cells of priests. It is believed that there is also the tomb of the voivode Vlad Tsepesh, a remarkable ruler of

<sup>15</sup> "The general strategy for the preservation and sharing of cultural, religious and historical heritage as a basis for the sustainable development of the joint activities of religious (pilgrimage) and cultural tourism in cross-border region of Ruse-Giurgiu", available in Romanian on the <http://christ-ro-bg.eu/>



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the Romanian state, who died on the road between Bucharest and Giurgiu. The deceased in Constantinople, Boyarin Dragici Kantakusin, and his son Konstantin Dragici were also buried here, creating a long-standing connection between the Comana region and the Cantakusino family. meaning. During the battles against the Ottomans in 1657-1662 and the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774, the monastery was the centre of public attention. The monastery is an active male monastery, and for several years there has been an attractive open-air historical museum nearby. Comana combines a natural park with an ornithological observatory offering 10 different thematic routes, with exit points from Kalugareni, Comana, Mihai Bravu, Islaz, Magura-Zboyu. Together the Open-Air History Museum is very attractive because of the artefacts associated with Vlad Tsepesh Dracula and his family and thanks to the rich souvenir shop, which also offers products made by monks - wine from the monastery, sweets and jams typical of the area - all these things make Comana an undisputed leader in tourism in the region.

-  **St. Nicolae Church "from Draganescu** is located on the road between the town of Mihailest and the municipality of Malu Sparta and belongs to the municipality of Mihailest and includes the villages of Draganescu and the Post office. The unique value of the place gives the frescoes painted from the inside, the work of Father Arseniy Boca, priest and painter. His fate and extraordinary work took him to this place for fifteen years, Father Boca worked here from 1967-to 1989.
-  **St. John the Russian Monastery** - is a monastic monastery built on the site of a former military part, one kilometre from Slobozia.<sup>16</sup>

### Ruse Region - Brief Presentation

Ruse is the fifth-largest city in Bulgaria and the largest city in the country on the banks of the Danube. It is located 320 km from the capital of Bulgaria Sofia and 203 km from Varna. The city is also called "Little Vienna" because of its unique ancient architecture. The city was founded by the Roman Emperor Vespasian in the period 69-79 under the name Sexaginta Prista ("Port of the Sixties Ships"). In the

Middle Ages, the Ruse Region was one of the most developed areas of the Bulgarian state. The town is famous for its preserved buildings from the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. There are more than 260 monuments and most of the city's attractions are in the centre of Ruse (museums, architectural landmarks, theatre, opera)

The two interesting regions find similarities in their location, especially in their proximity to the Danube river and in the predominance of flat relief in the two regions.

<sup>16</sup> ditto



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**Figure 7: Cross-border region of Ruse-Giurgiu**

Source: Google Earth

The Ruse-Giurgiu cultural corridor is an area of great cultural and religious importance. This is considered an area with a strong spiritual charge, and the churches present in both regions are buildings that attract visitors of different ages, with their magnificent architectural silhouette, style of construction, interior and external decoration, but also with spiritual values. St. Petka/Paraskeva, St. George and St. Panteleimon.

**St. Petka/Paraskeva** is considered the patron saint of Romania and is one of the most revered saints in the whole country.

**St. Panteleimon** is the spiritual patron of The Vede Church in Giurgiu, but also a patron of more than 219 worship services and churches in Bulgaria. development of tourist products for their inclusion and incorporation.

**St. George is considered a protector of both the Giurgiu and Ruse regions.** The name Giurgiu comes from the name of St. George, which is a symbol of the respect people have for him. A small portion of his relics is stored. Every year Romanian tourists visit this



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church to worship the relics of the saint, indicating that Ikumenic tourism is already taking shape in the area and can develop.<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, the cultural and religious corridor of the Ruse-Giurgiu cross-border area is from a spiritual and religious point of view an important and interesting object. Proper use of resources can bring economic benefits to both areas of interest and help improve cross-border cooperation.

### 2.2.2. Presentation of the Church of St. Petka/ Paraskeva" (Ruse, Bulgaria)

*"You are the mediator of those who have problems and the port of those who are exposed to storms! Your coffin pours out a wholesome stream and casts out the demonic hordes. Your Church heals the handicaps, gives sight to the blind, and cleanses the lepers. "*

**Sveta Petka (St. Paraskeva)** is the patron saint of Bulgarians and Romanians and her name bears the church of the leading partner in the ChristHeritage ROBG-302 project.

The **Church of St. Paraskeva (St . Petka)** is named after the last rock church in Ruse.

The architectural project of the church is the first bold and successful attempt to recreate the Round Church (Golden Church) in Preslav, built by Tsar Simeon I. For the first time, it was converted according to the plans of the architect of the National Museum in Sofia Dr Alexander Rashenov ( 1892 - 1938).

The temple was consecrated by Dorostolian and Chervenski Metropolitan Michael on April 30, 1944.

The mural was consecrated by the Dorostol and Chervenski Metropolitan Sofronius on June 30, 1965.

The building is 33 meters long, three times smaller than the Golden Church in Preslav, which is 99 meters long. Its width is 17 meters. The diameter of the dome is 13.30 m, and the internal height is 16.15 m. The bell tower with the cross is 22.70 m high.

The beautiful wooden carved iconostasis, made in 1942 by the graduate of the Rusen Furniture School Georgi Genov" and painted by the artist Georgi Karakashev, is in harmony with the internal lines and plans.

<sup>17</sup> Exploration, The Christian Heritage along the Ruse-Giurgiu Cultural Corridor, available <https://keep.eu/projects/21297/The-Christian-heritage-alon-EN/>, available on 12.08.2021.



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**Figure 8: Image of the interior of st. Paraskeva (St. Petka), Ruse, Bulgaria**

Source: Representatives of St. Petka Church

The mural was painted by Prof . Nikola Kojuharov, Tsanko Vasilev and decorator Petar Mihaylov, and some of them can not be seen elsewhere. For example, in very few churches you can find an icon of one of the Bulgarian saints - St. Zlata Maglenska.



**Figure 9: Image of the interior of st. Paraskeva (St. Petka), Ruse, Bulgaria**

Source: Representatives of St. Petka Church

Also impressive is the huge "eye of God" painted on the ceiling.



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**Figure No 10: Image of the interior of st. Paraskeva (St. Petka), Ruse, Bulgaria, painting in the attic of the Church**

Source: Representatives of St. Petka Church

Unique icons of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary are displayed in the small chapel located on the second floor of the church where winter is served. The other icons in the church were painted by Todor Yankov and Nikola Pindikov.



**Figure 11: Image of the exterior of st. Paraskeva (St. Petka), Ruse, Bulgaria**  
Source: Official site of robg project - 302 "Christian heritage along the Cultural Corridor Ruse-Giurgiu"



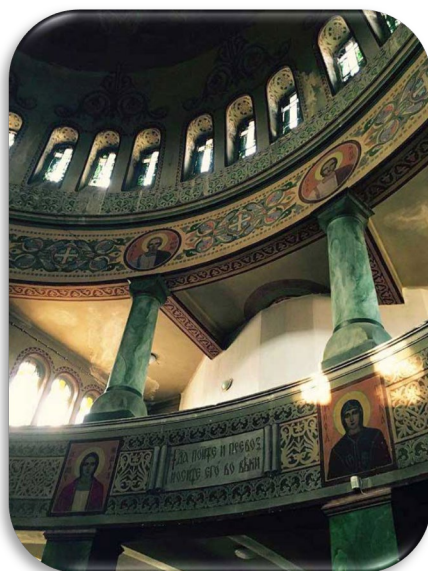
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**Figure No. 12: Image of the interior of st. Paraskeva (St. Petka), Ruse, Bulgaria, before restoration**

Source: Representatives of St. Petka Church

The idea for the construction of the Rousse Temple of St. Petka dates back to 1921 when the chairman of the trustees of st. George's Protoyerei Temple Konstantin Terziev proposed to build a new temple for remote parishes in the western part of the city. A New Temple Fund was established, which receives donations from Christians and it is decided that the church will be dedicated to St. Paraskeva.

A construction committee called the Committee for the Construction of the Temple of St. Petka was unanimously elected. Petka" in Ruse, including Dorostolian and Chervenski Metropolitan st. Mikhail, Yordan priest Krastev Ganchev - Chairman, Sunday Valkanov Petrov - Vice Chairman, Pencho I. Astardzhiev - S.O. -President Hincho Ive. Kirov - Secretary, Nikola N. Pshev - Treasurer, Lyuben Yu. Dinalov - architect, Georgi R. Karakashev - artist, Georgi Yord. Genov - sculptor, Dimitar N. Lyasov, Mihail Hr. Kirmagov, Nikola Ive. Yovchev, Petar Petar Kambourov, Ilya Hr. Penev, Marin D. Arnaudov and Todor I. Petrov and the church governors - Neiko Stoyanov and Nikolay H. Marinov. Stoyan Topilov, Yv. Petrov - teacher and Marin Gardenarov. The Orthodox Church celebrates Petkovden on October 14. Its name comes from the Slavic word "Friday", the fifth day of the week. It is considered a free translation and full compliance with the name "Paraskev" or "Paraskeva" ("Friday", in the sense of preparing for the holiday). The dome of st. Petka" has unusual sizes for churches in Bulgaria. There is no such dome in any church in Bulgaria. This architectural feature is due to the continuity with the history on which the architectural style of the church is based. The architectural project of the church is the first bold and successful attempt to restore the Round Church (Golden Church) in the old Preslav, built by Tsar Simeon I.

### ***2.2.3. Presentation of st. Panteleimon Church (Giurgiu, Romania)***

The **Church** of St. Panteleimon (Giurgiu, **Romania**) was built between 1835 and 1845 and is located in the centre of Comuna Vedeia. St. Panteleimon Church in the Municipality of



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Vedea was founded by Dr Apostol Arsake (1789-1874), it was built between 1835-1845, as follows from the inscription on a marble slab located in the parable of the church, written in Greek and alphabet, with the following translation: "The Apostle Arsahe, Doctor, built this church from scratch in 1845 to honour the memory of his son George, who died in Vienna on 24 January 1835.'



**Figure 13: An image of the marble slab placed on the porch of St. Panteleimon in Vedea, before restoration**

Source: S.C Synesis Partners S.R.L. Team of Consultants

Without the consent of his parents, he loses his life in a moment of wandering, shooting himself on January 24, 1835. Dr Apostolic Arsake built this church, which we now know as the Church of St. Panteleimon.

Inside the church, the moment of Georgy's death was captured in two allegorical paintings made by the artist Gheorghe M. Tatarescu, on a canvas measuring 180/83 cm, placed on the western wall of the church, at the entrance, on the right of.

The first photo shows the Apostle Arsach, in the shadow of which an angel is seen reaching out to a young couple as if asking for a blessing for them. Arsake reaches out to the young couple in the photo next to her, symbolizing his blessing.



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**Figure No 14: An image with a representative painting of the Church of St. Panteleimon of Vedeia, before restoration**  
Source: St. Panteleimon Church, Vedeia



**Figure No 15: An image with a representative painting of the Church of St. Panteleimon of Vedeia, before restoration**



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Source: St. Panteleimon Church, Vedeia

The second picture shows two young men behind whom the Virgin Mary appears, who appear to be hugging them. of roses, life was only one morning." <sup>18</sup>.

Much of the artistic work *of the artist* Georgi M. Tatarescu is devoted to religious art, creating a personal style influenced by Italian academicism and partly by traditional Byzantine iconography. The Church of St. Nicolae Shelari and the Radu Voda Monastery Church, all from Bucharest, the new church of the Bistritsa Monastery, the Metropolitan Cathedral of Iași, the Greek Church of Braila, the Cholanu Monastery Church of Buzau and the Church of St. Panteleimon of the Municipality of Vedeia, Giurgiu County.

He came to Bucharest before 1800 after his first years of school with Romanian teachers. he did not stay in Germany and came to Bucharest. In Romania, he worked for a long time as a doctor in various hospitals, two of which were Panteleimon and Kolzea in Bucharest.

In 1819, he bought from the Monastery of Radu Voda two properties from the District of Llaška (present-day Giurgiu), one from Parapani (now Vedeia) and one from St. Entering politics, thanks to his intelligence tremendous knowledge, he quickly became famous in this field. The Romanian ruler Grigore Gika recognized its value by appointing him as his private secretary, where he dealt with foreign policy issues.

In 1874, towards the end of his life, the founder again wrote the church, bringing in the famous artist Georgi M. Tatarascu.

The vault at the Altar sat down, and depicts God's mother, "taller than heaven, with the young Jesus on his hands." The picture is framed to the left and right by two angels. On the eastern wall of the altar in the pendant are depicted the Holy Three Arches and St. Archdeacon Stephen.

At the proscomedy, on the stone slab in the wall of the church, the monument of the ktitor is inscribed with carved letters. Above the temple, on the vault, is depicted God the Father. In the hat is painted Pantocrator with the gospel, framed by three angels bowed before Him. Below, on the circle of the hat, are the 4 evangelists, in the pendant. On the second arch of the pendant is also painted the prophet Moses. A big picture follows, the Holy Trinity: The Lord Jesus Christ, hugging with his right hand the Cross of crucifixion, God the Father blessing, and in front the Holy Ghost, in the form of a dove from which the rays of light come out. The Holy Trinity has on the left and right, in large sizes, two angels who glorify the divine faces: WORLD, WORLD. Aaron is painted on the third arch. The second and third vaults are in large sizes st. John the Baptist with the message "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." In the apse on the left are St. Martyrs Georgi and Panteleimon, and above, in symmetry, with holy resurrection is the Nativity of Christ, on the western wall are the two paintings of the ktitor.

At the end of the XIX century, the rural municipality *was called Arsache or Parapani* but in 1950. the rural municipality was transferred to Giurgiu County in the Bucharest region.

<sup>18</sup> RobG Project Official Website - 302 "CHRISTIAN HERITAGE ALONG THE RUSE-GIURGIU CULTURAL CORRIDOR available on <http://christ-ro-bg.eu/ro/sf-pantelimon-2/> consulted on 28.08.2021.



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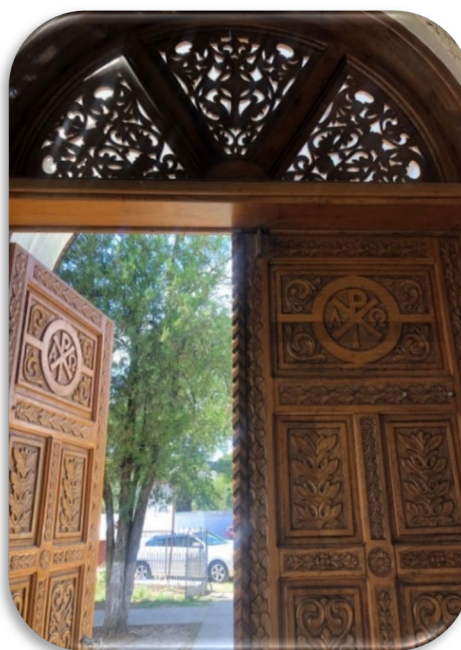
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**Figure 16 Image with the Church of St. Nicholas Panteleimon of Vedeia, before restoration**  
Source: St. Panteleimon Church, Vedeia



**Figure 17: Image with st. Panteleimon of Vedeia, before restoration**  
Source: St. Panteleimon Church, Vedeia



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**Figure 18: Image with the ceiling of st. Panteleimon of Vedeia, before restoration**  
Source: St. Panteleimon Church, Vedeia



**Figure No 19: Painting from the Church of St. Panteleimon in Vedeia, after restoration**  
Source: St. Panteleimon Church, Vedeia



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## 2.2.4. Presentation of the Church of St. Georgi" (Ruse, Bulgaria)

St. George Church was built on the site of a wooden church, that burned down during the Russo-Turkish War 1806-1812. Veliko Martyr Georgi" is 32 meters long and 14 meters wide and has a depth of about two meters and is also the oldest in the region.



**Figure 20: Image with St. Georgi Church in Ruse, before restoration**

Source: Representatives of St George's Church

The church was painted in 1924, but in 1958 the icons were replaced with new ones by Professor Nikolay Kojuharov and the artist Tsanko Vasilev.

At the same time, the Church impresses with the architectural elements that could be preserved, such as the Belfry, which weighs 445 kilograms and stores the old stones from which it was made.



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**Figure 21: Image with the bell tower of St. Nicholas Church Georgi" in Ruse, during the restoration**

Source: Representatives of St George's Church



**Figure 22: Image with st. Georgi" in Ruse, before restoration**

Source: Representatives of St George's Church



**Figure 23: Image with the Church of St. Nicholas Georgi" in Ruse, before restoration**

Source: Representatives of St George's Church

Since 6 May 2002, St. George's Day has been designated as the public holiday of the Ruse Region. Five Bulgarian temples store particles from the relics of St. Great Martyr Georgi, the most important being the one that is stored in the temple of the cathedral in Ruse. It was bested by



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the Catholic Church in 2003.<sup>19</sup>



**Figure 24: Image with st. Georgi" in Ruse, before restoration**

Source: Official site of robg project - 302 "Christian heritage along the Cultural Corridor Ruse-Giurgiu"



**Figure 25: Image of the interior of st. Georgi" in Ruse, before restoration**

Source: Representatives of St George's Church

<sup>19</sup> <http://christ-ro-bg.eu/ro/sf-gheorghe/>



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**Figure 26: Image of the interior of st. Georgi" in Ruse, before restoration**

Source: Representatives of St George's Church

- In Romania, the history of St. George is related to an old legend, according to which the saint was a brave and very strong, protector of the warriors.
- The cult of St. George is especially popular in most Slavic countries. However, in Georgia, there is the largest number of Christian churches bearing its name.
- The cult of St. George is also included in the Islamic religion. Girgis is one of the most revered Muslim heroes. Interestingly, most of the biographies and legends of St. George of Islam are very similar to those of the Greek and Latin Christian East.

### **2.3.Trends in tourist supply and demand – tourist potential in Giurgiu County, Romania**

Romania has significant tourist potential, but over time the number of tourists visiting tourist attractions and resorts shows no significant fluctuations. According to world bank data, there was an increase of 50% in the period 2011-2019 in terms of the number of foreign tourists coming to the country. Giurgiu is a county in the historic Muntenia region, in the south of Romania. The headquarters of the district is Giurgiu municipality. It is bordered by teleorman, Dumbovitsa, Ilfov



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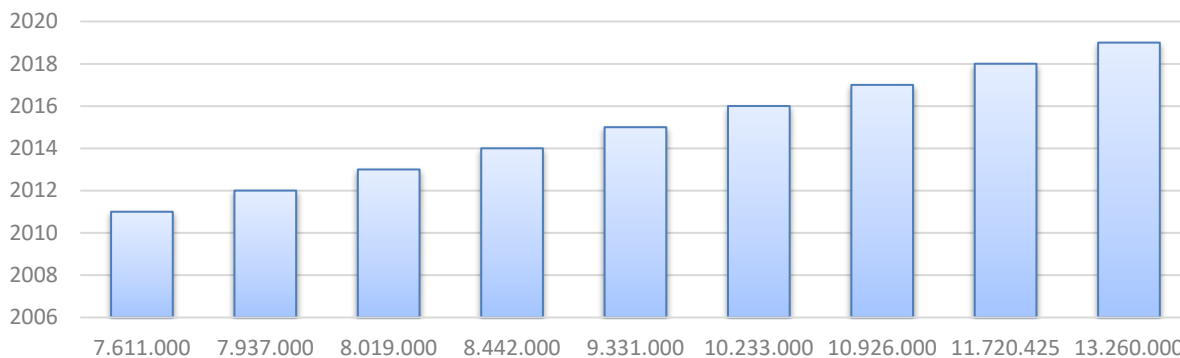


and Călărași counties. Giurgiu is located on the border with Bulgaria, located north of the Danube River. The county is located entirely in Munthania.<sup>20</sup>



**Figure 27: Giurgiu County Map**

Source: Google



**Figure 28: The development of visits of foreign tourists in the period 2011-2019**

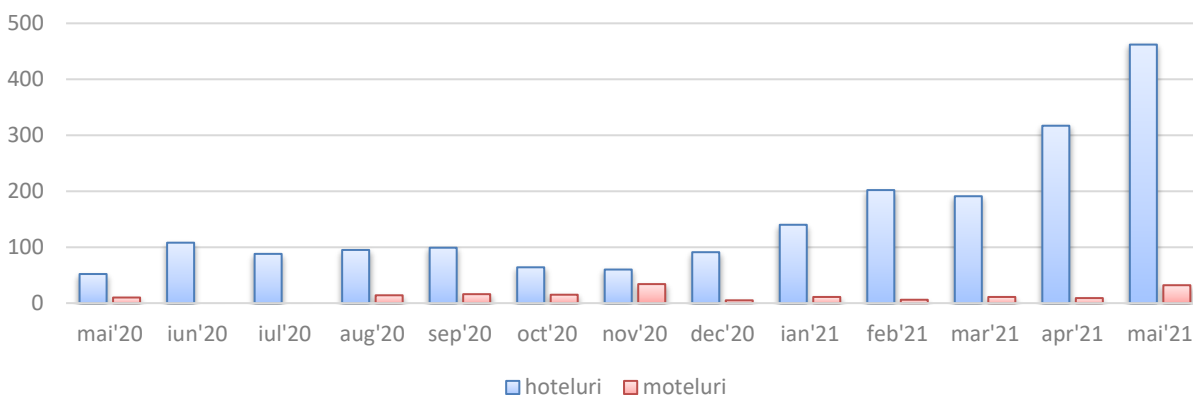
Source: Regional Sustainability in Tourism: Implementation of Cross-Border Partnerships

It is important to mention that Giurgiu County is an important transit hub, river and railway line, positioned on the Danube - Rin Canal - Maine - Dunau corridor. Along the river, the county is connected to 9 countries, as well as to the Black and North Seas. Moreover, the pan-European railway, which starts from Ostend (Belgium), passes through Berlin, Prague, Budapest, Bucharest, Giurgiu, Ruse, Sofia, Istanbul and through Thessaloniki connects with Athens. From an economic point of view, this positioning represents a special advantage for the entire county. Regarding

<sup>20</sup>Mariya Stankova South-West University “Neofit Rilski” - Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, Svetoslav Kaleychev University of World and National Economy, Sofia, Bulgaria, Regional Sustainability in Tourism: The implementation of crossborder partnerships, available in English in <http://www.um.ase.ro/no153/3.pdf>

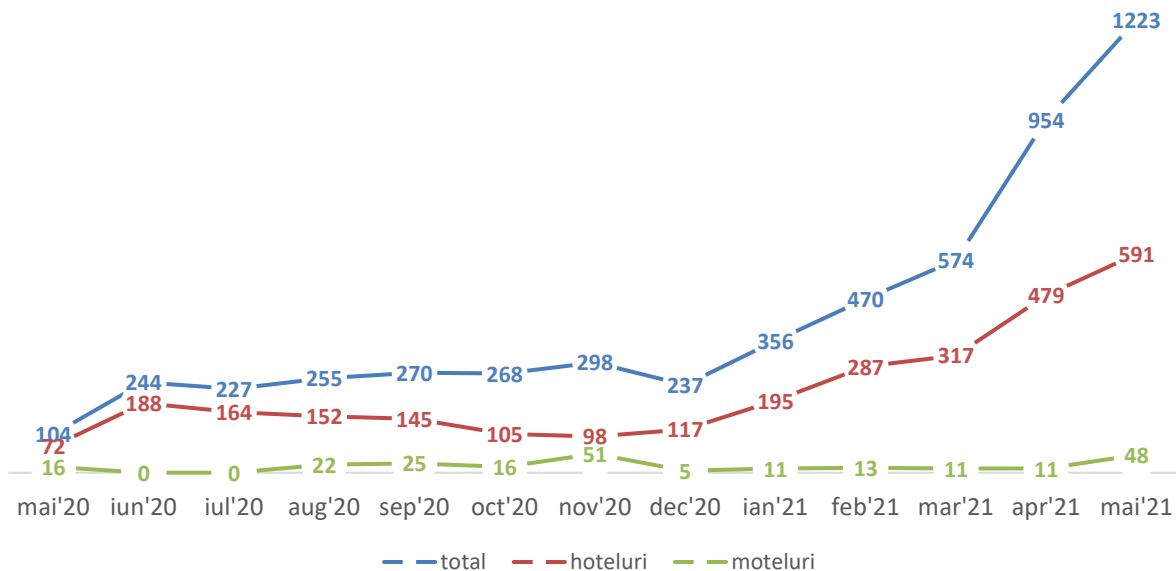


tourism in Giurgiu, over the past year, there has been a significant increase in arrivals and overnight stays in the area, as well as the number of hotel units available. Thus, it is clear that the form of transitional tourism, conditioned by the geographical position of the county, which was the most common<sup>212223</sup> in the area, was eventually overtaken by other forms of tourism, such as business, culture and events.



**Figure 29: The development of arrivals in the main reception structures for tourists between May 2020 and May 2021**

Source: INS - Giurgiu County Statistics Directorate



<sup>21</sup> <http://www.primariagiurgiu.ro/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://giurgiu.insse.ro/despre-noi/despre-județul-giurgiu/>

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.spatial.mdrap.ro/files/Project%20results/Work%20Package%204/Analiza%20RO\\_BG%20partea%202\\_ro.pdf](http://www.spatial.mdrap.ro/files/Project%20results/Work%20Package%204/Analiza%20RO_BG%20partea%202_ro.pdf)



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**Figure 30: The development of overnight stays in the main structures of tourist reception in May 2020 - May 2021**

Source: INS - Giurgiu County Statistics Directorate

From the graphs above we conclude that at the Giurgiu county level there is a trend of increase from month to month in terms of the development of the number of arrivals and overnight stays. The highest increases were recorded in April and May, most likely due to the beginning of the summer season, but also the lifting of restrictions imposed by the crisis caused by the spread of the SARS VOC-2 virus.

Currently, there are 13 tourist accommodation units in the district, of which: are 3 hotels, 5 motels, 1 city pension, 1 country board, and 3 accommodations on ships. The district's accommodation capacity amounts to 939 seats, including 328 places in hotels, 172 motel seats, 13 places in city and rural boarding houses, and 426 places in ship accommodation.

## 2.4.Trends in tourist supply and demand - tourist potential in the Ruse region, Bulgaria

"The Port of the Sixties" (Sexaginta Prista), as the city of Ruse was called when it was founded by the Roman Emperor Vespasian, is today the fifth-largest city in Bulgaria and the most important urban area in the country from the Danube coast.



**Figure 31: Map of Bulgaria**

Source: Google



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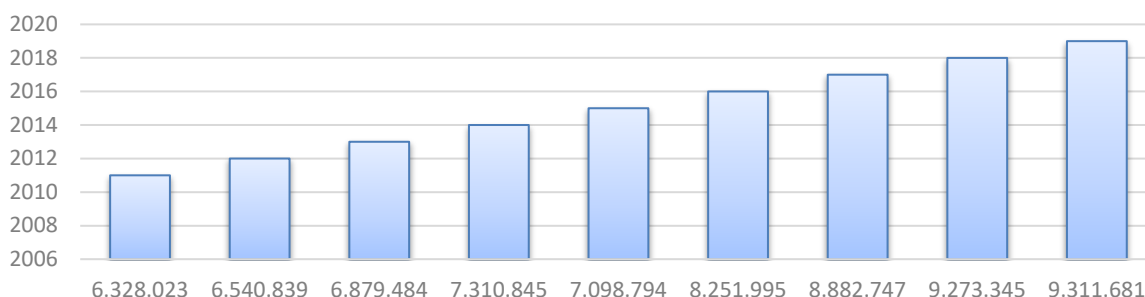
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In Bulgaria, tourism has always been a very important sector of the national economy, contributing to both job creation and the generation of internal capital. There is high demand, especially for the Bulgarian coast, and the tourist infrastructure is developing and expanding at an accelerated pace, offering a diverse range of products and services. At the same time, investment in tourism continues and continues to contribute to the sustainable development of regions and areas with increased tourist potential.



**Figure 32: The development of visits of foreign tourists for the period 2011-2019**  
Source: Regional Sustainability in Tourism: Implementation of Cross-Border Partnerships

Like Giurgiu, Ruse is an important port city opening to the Rhine-Main-Danube corridor, which connects 13 European countries and Asia Minor via the Black Sea.

Although the Ruse district is also an important transit point compared to Giurgiu, tourism is developing in several areas, with business tourism, sustainable tourism and cultural tourism prevailing.<sup>24</sup> In 2020, according to data of the National Statistical Institute in the Ruse region, there were 39 hotel units with a capacity of 1495 beds.

The revenues received from the accommodation of foreign tourists totalled EUR 2100.57 (calculated at the exchange rate of 1 lev - 0.51 euro from 20.08.2021), the highest registered in the Central-Northern region (consisting of Veliko Tarnovo, Gabrovo, Razgrad, Ruse, Silistra).

From a statistical point of view, however, the central-northern region ranks last in the sum of the accumulated tourism revenues according to the central and marine regions preferred by tourists<sup>25</sup>.

**Table 1: Data on the number of units available for accommodation, accommodation, arrivals, and capital generated in May 2020**

County	Number of units	Number of beds/seats	Number of nights	Number of arrivals in accommodation	Capital from overnight stays
--------	-----------------	----------------------	------------------	-------------------------------------	------------------------------

<sup>24</sup>Analysis and diagnosis of the current situation in the romania-bulgaria cross-border area, available [http://www.spatial.mdrap.ro/files/Project%20results/Work%20Package%204/Analiza%20RO\\_BG%20partea%202\\_en.pdf](http://www.spatial.mdrap.ro/files/Project%20results/Work%20Package%204/Analiza%20RO_BG%20partea%202_en.pdf), reviewed on 28.08.2021

<sup>25</sup> National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria, information is available on <https://www.nsi.bg/en/content/7067/annual-data>, access on 12.08.2021.



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			units					
			Total	Of which foreigners	Total	Of which foreigners	Total	Of which foreigners
<b>Rusenski</b>	39	1. 495	2. 477	81	1. 649	40	52. 636,92	2. 100,57

Source: National Statistical Institute Bulgaria

In May 2021, the number of hotel units available increased. As a result, there are currently 54 hotel units in the Ruse district.

In addition, the number of foreign tourists increased by about 24 times more than the previous year, and the value of the capital at night is about 5 times higher<sup>26</sup>.

**Table 2: Data on the number of units available for accommodation, accommodation, overnight stays, arrivals, and capital generated in May 2021**

County	Number of units	Number of beds/seats	Number of nights		Number of arrivals in accommodation units		Capital from overnight stays	
			Total	Of which foreigners	Total	Of which foreigners	Total	Of which foreigners
<b>Ruse</b>	54	2. 170	11. 367	1. 963	7. 102	1. 159	280. 791,60	56. 772,08

Source: National Statistical Institute Bulgaria

The general trends in the development of tourism in the Ruse region are intensifying. Compared to the data recorded in May 2020, The number of places available in accommodation increased by 31.10%, the total number of nights spent increased by 78.20%, the total number of arrivals increased by 96.54%, and the total capital of nights in the area increased by 81.25%.

<sup>26</sup>National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria, information is available on [https://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/press releases / Accommodation2021-05\\_en\\_XADRFQW.pdf](https://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/press%20releases/Accommodation2021-05_en_XADRFQW.pdf), access on 12.08.2021



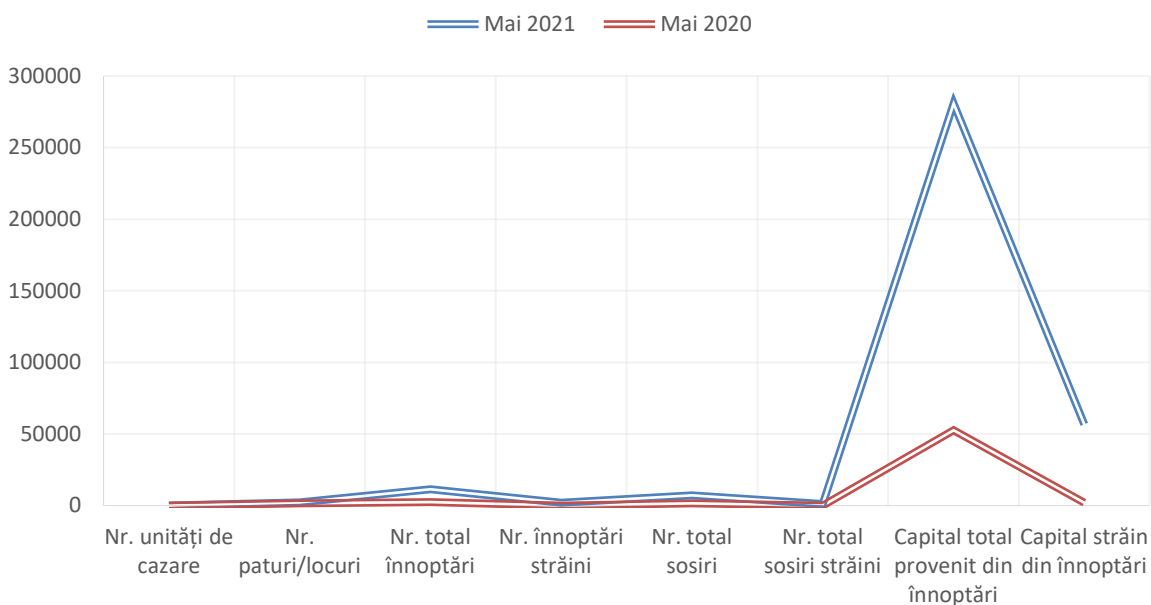
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**Table 3: Development of the number of units available for accommodation, accommodation, overnight stays, arrivals, and capital generated in May 2020 compared to May 2021**  
Source: National Statistical Institute Bulgaria

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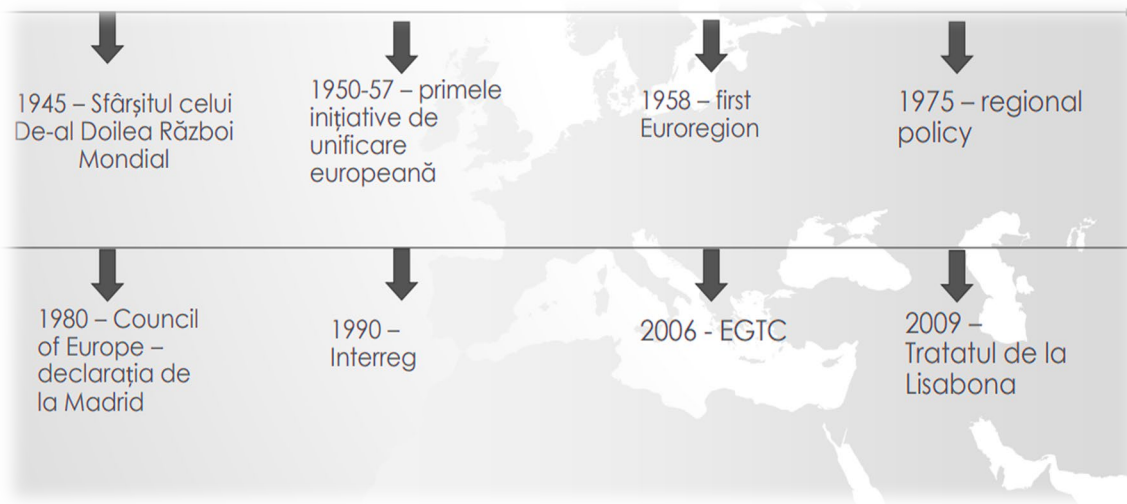


## Chapter 3. Identification of religious cultural tourist resources in the cross-border area Ruse Giurgiu

### 3.1. Identification of cultural and religious tourist resources in the ruse-Giurgiu cross-border area

This chapter contains information on the cultural heritage of the cross-border region of Ruse-Giurgiu to relatively present the main elements of the cultural and religious heritage. Religious heritage is important for several reasons. An important aspect of this view is the "legacy" as a manifestation of the past. Most cultural events and festivals are historically related to religion, often with religious conflicts.

The common heritage of the community, left by previous generations with the responsibility to pass it on to future generations, a landmark of identity bearing the traditions, beliefs and values of civilization, historical events and the evolution of society, cultural heritage unites, following the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Europe, 1986): historical monuments, groups of buildings collected in ensembles or objects, creations of the human hand in a natural environment. The concept of heritage is enriched over time with new meanings covering various fields such as art education and research, architecture, archaeology, history, social sciences, politics, as also public works, landscaping, tourism and services.



27

1945 - The end of the Second World War  
1950-1957 - the first initiatives of European unification  
1958 - first Euroregion

1945 - World War II ends  
1950-1957 - the first European initiatives for reunification

<sup>27</sup> Assessment of cross-border cooperation - Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence. Project title: In and Out: Understanding the European Union beyond its borders <http://europolity.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Evaluarea-cooper%C4%83rii-transfrontaliere.pdf>



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1975 - regional policy 1980 - Council of Europe - declarația de la Madrid 1990 - Interreg 2006 - EGIC 2009 - Treaty of Lisbon	1958 - first Euroregion 1975 - regional policy 1980 - Council of Europe - Madrid Declaration 1990 - Mezhduregh 2006 - EGIC 2009 - Treaty of Lisbon
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Also, going back to the concept of tourism, over time several theorists tried to define the tourist destination. Probably the shortest definition of a tourist destination in literature gives Medlik, which considers the tourist destination a geographical area (country, region, city, etc.) that attracts tourists.<sup>28</sup>

In the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu, there are a large number of monuments, churches and ruins that belong to the cultural and religious heritage. They are an attractive resource for the development of ecumenical tourism, in which the interest of tourists is growing significantly. Thus, the cross-border area can become a cultural and religious core.

Although some religious monuments in the cross-border region are already known to the public and benefit from the promotion but are not included in the routes advertised for tourists, many of them, less well known, are in a state of advanced degradation. The potential of these monuments is huge, with an undeniable history and spiritual significance. Preserving them through their integration into the economy is necessary and can have positive effects from several perspectives.

With proper exploitation, they can become a significant part of the local economy, contributing to sustainable development in both Giurgiu county and the Ruse region.

In addition, the promotion and inclusion of several elements of religious heritage in tourist routes will lead to the preservation of local history, traditions and customs.

Given that the cross-border area is already trending in terms of the number of tourists arriving in the area and the number of nights spent, the development of religious tourism is favoured. Therefore, the premises and resources needed to create integrated tourism products that increase public interest in the cross-border area are favourable.

The development of cultural and religious tourism will preserve both the objectives of the heritage and the traditions and customs specific to the region of Ruse-Giurgiu. Furthermore, the creation of tourist products will be a factor in economic and social development and contribute to a higher standard of living in both areas.

<sup>28</sup> Medlik, S., Dictionary of travel, tourism and hospitality. Third edition. Routledge, 2012



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### 3.2. Analysis of cross-border tourist supply and demand Ruse-Giurgiu, with a focus on cultural and religious tourism


The Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu, the associative structure of the two municipalities established in 2001, is located in the southeastern part of Europe, on the border between Romania and Bulgaria - which became the Member States of the European Union in 2007, taking advantage of a strategic geographical position. In general, the region is located at the intersection of two of the ten Pan-European corridors - Pan-European Corridor VII (Danube), which connects Western Europe with the Black Sea and Central Asia, and Pan-European Corridor IX, which connects Scandinavia and the Russian Federation with southern Europe and Asia Minor. On the other hand, the distance from the two capitals - Bucharest and Sofia - is only 65 km, respectively 310 km, with the two agglomerations bringing together a market of around 5 million users. For 60 years, the Druzha Bridge, built in the 1950s between Ruse and Giurgiu, was the only one connecting Romania and Bulgaria. It should be noted that the two cities should be considered in terms of the polarizing regions, namely Giurgiu county and Ruse region (NUTS level 3), with an area of over 6242 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 500 746 inhabitants (2011).

Giurgiu Port is the closest (40 miles) to Romania's capital, Bucharest - which does not have access to river or sea transport. Giurgiu is the residence of the district of the same name, with almost 270,000 inhabitants, which serves administrative, educational, medical, commercial services, etc. Moreover, the industrial activity of the city, which has been restructured since 1990, is growing against the backdrop of attracted investment, especially since 2000.

That is why the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu plays a key role in the economy of both countries. Existing infrastructure consisting of ports, airports, the Danube bridge, European roads, state hospitals, private clinics, primary and secondary schools, university campuses, shopping centres, museums, philharmonic, recreation complexes, etc. serves over 500 000 inhabitants, so we can talk about urban agglomeration of European importance.<sup>29</sup>

The cultural and entertainment infrastructure of the Euroregion is capitalized by a series of events organized annually, such as Enyovden - Annual Carnival, Ruse Days, Music Festival March Music Days, Collision Course Skating Festival, Festival Folklore Music Competition "On the Banks of the Danube", Giurgiu Days.

From the point of view of the tourist offer, the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu is characterized by the presence in its geographical area of unique natural resources, which can attract a significant number of tourists. Thus, in the area, we find nature reserves and nature parks (sites of public importance, special areas for the protection of ornitho-fauna - included in the Natura 2000 network) - which include forests, canyons and large wetlands where rare species can be found, some among other extinctions. Among them we can indicate:

 Rusenski Lom Nature Park - established in 1970, covers an area of 3408 hectares and is one of

<sup>29</sup> Investment profile of the Ruse-Giurgiu Euroregion, developed in the framework of the project "Operations in the Ruse-Giurgiu Euroregion - Opportunities for Integrated Management through implementation of the Master Plan", co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), through Romania Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Bulgaria, 2012, available on [https://obshtinaruse.bg/uploads/files/projects/MasterPlan/Invest\\_Profile\\_EN .pdf](https://obshtinaruse.bg/uploads/files/projects/MasterPlan/Invest_Profile_EN.pdf), access on 15.08.2021



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the 10 natural parks in Bulgaria. It includes a canyon-type territory, with caves and rock formations along the river of the same name, with 60 species of trees and shrubs, 22 species of fish, 10 species of amphibians, 19 reptile species and 193 bird species. rarely;

- ✚ Lipnik Park - with an area of about 2000 hectares and different types of trees (lime);
- ✚ Orlova Chuka Cave - the second largest cave in Bulgaria (about 15 km long);
- ✚ Comana Nature Park - with an area of over 25 000 hectares, includes a unique reserve for Romanian peony;
- ✚ Kama Dinu-Pusserika Nature Reserve - an area of islands located along the Danube River, on 2400 hectares, a flood lowland with rare species of aquatic plants, mushrooms and mosses.

There are also several cultural sites of great tourist significance in the Euroregion. Thus, the city of Ruse is one of the few cities in the Balkans, which has a neo-baroque and neo-rococo architecture dating back to the 19th/twentieth century, which is why it is often called "little Vienna". In total there are over 260 monuments in the city, the most representative of which are:

- ✚ Monument of Freedom
- ✚ Lucrative building - Theatre "Sava Ognyanov"
- ✚ The historical centre of the city (the square around the History Museum)
- ✚ Old School of Music
- ✚ Alexandrova Street - a collection of baroque and rococo-style buildings;
- ✚ The ruins of the Roman Citadel Sexagingta Prista
- ✚ Cervenka Fortress
- ✚ Pantheon of Heroes
- ✚ TV Tower - one of the tallest buildings in the Balkans
- ✚ Basarbovo Monastery
- ✚ St. Paul's Catholic Cathedral
- ✚ Ivanovo Wooden Church - a UNESCO World Heritage Site

Giurgiu also has several built heritage sites that attract many tourists:

- ✚ Clock Tower
- ✚ Heroes' Mausoleum
- ✚ The ruins of Giurgiu Fortress
- ✚ Episcopal Cathedral "Assumption of the Virgin Mary"

As the analysis of trends in the supply and demand of tourists in Giurgiu and the Ruse Region shows, the accommodation infrastructure is insufficient, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in Giurgiu, which is a weak place and vulnerable to tourism.



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### 3.3. Identification of vulnerabilities affecting the sustainable use of cultural and religious tourism resources in the Ruse-Giurgiu cross-border area

We will then continue to identify vulnerabilities that affect the sustainable use of cultural and religious tourism resources in the Ruse-Giurgiu cross-border area by carrying out a SWOT analysis of cultural and religious tourism resources.

STRONG POINTS	WEAK POINTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↑ <i>the availability of the Danube (an important resource for tourism)</i></li> <li>↑ <i>the availability of diverse and numerous natural resources (protected areas, natural and national parks, biosphere reserves, Natura 2000 sites) that can contribute to the expansion and diversification of cultural and religious tourism</i></li> <li>↑ <i>the availability of cultural and historical resources of national and general human value (archaeological sites, churches, architectural monuments)</i></li> <li>↑ <i>arrivals of foreign tourists in the cross-border area</i></li> <li>↑ <i>the existence of multiple ways to cross the Danube (bridge, barge, ferry) in the cross-border area</i></li> <li>↑ <i>There has been an increase in personal accommodation services through the Booking and Airbnb internet platforms</i></li> <li>↑ <i>Rehabilitation and strengthening of tourist attractions with religious cultural impact (including st. Panteleimon Church, St. Petka and St. George)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↓ <i>insufficient promotion and use of cultural and religious tourism potential</i></li> <li>↓ <i>the lack of promoted tourist routes</i></li> <li>↓ <i>implicit designation of the cross-border area as a transit tourism area as the dominant form of tourism to the detriment of other forms</i></li> <li>↓ <i>lack of promotion and marking of tourist objectives</i></li> <li>↓ <i>lack of promotion of cultural and religious activities and traditions</i></li> <li>↓ <i>underdeveloped infrastructure and services in the tourism sector in Giurgiu County, Romania</i></li> <li>↓ <i>lack of programmes for the development of cross-border tourism</i></li> <li>↓ <i>underdeveloped leisure infrastructure</i></li> <li>↓ <i>The tendency to reduce the population of the Euroregion is a significant obstacle to the provision of high-level tourism services.</i></li> </ul>



OPPORTUNITY	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↑ <i>capitalising on the tourism potential of the Danube</i></li> <li>↑ <i>capitalising and promoting the tourist potential of the cross-border area and the quality of tourist services</i></li> <li>↑ <i>promoting ish tourism (culturally religious)</i></li> <li>↑ <i>modernising infrastructure and improving the proposal for cultural and religious tourism</i></li> <li>↑ <i>promotion of travel packages according to demand</i></li> <li>↑ <i>the high potential of the tourism sector favours the economic development of the cross-border area</i></li> <li>↑ <i>career opportunities for specialists with theological education.</i></li> <li>↑ <i>the realisation of the potential for the absorption of significant financial resources through the Interreg VI-A Romania-Bulgaria 2021-2027 programme, but also with the help of other financial instruments such as the Danube Transnational Programme</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↓ <i>the existence of the COVID-19 global pandemic and, as a result, a drastic decline in tourism</i></li> <li>↓ <i>competition in the tourism sector in the international and regional market</i></li> <li>↓ <i>uncoordinated tourism</i></li> <li>↓ <i>The proximity of the capital Bucharest attracts tourists to engage in tourism and short tours of Giurgiu County and return to the opportunities offered by the tourist services in Bucharest.</i></li> <li>↓ <i>low incomes, purchasing power and low standard of living</i></li> <li>↓ <i>increase the prices of basic resources - energy, water and as a result - an increase in the prices of tourist services</i></li> <li>↓ <i>deterioration of cultural and natural heritage</i></li> </ul>

In this way, we can observe the existence of numerous vulnerabilities affecting the sustainable use of cultural and religious tourist resources in the Ruse-Giurgiu cross-border area.

Insufficient promotion and use of cultural and religious tourist potential determine the decrease in the number of tourists or, at best, the maintenance of a constant number of tourists, while preventing the achievement of the main objective of development of the cross-border region of Ruse-Giurgiu, namely an increase in the number of tourists visiting and staying in the area.

Similarly, the lack of promoted tourist routes, linked to the implicit designation of the cross-border area as a transit tourism area as the dominant form of tourism to the detriment of other forms, determines that tourists arriving in the cross-border area should be limited to transit and not visit Ruse-Giurgiu, given that there is no promotion of recreational activities or opportunities for cultural and religious visits.

Also, even though the ruse-Giurgiu cross-border area has an important cultural and religious heritage, there was a lack of promotion of cultural and religious activities and traditions related to the lack of coordination of tourist resources in the two regions, Ruse and Giurgiu.

Thus, the tourists arriving in the area have not prepared any tourist reception infrastructure, except for some accommodation that is poorly developed in the tourism sector in Giurgiu County, Romania. There is no infotainment or specialized staff to guide tourists on cultural



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and religious routes, which also indicates a lack of programs for the development of cross-border tourism.

One last identified vulnerability is the deterioration of cultural and natural heritage in the absence of investments made to rehabilitate heritage.



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### 3.4. Proposed measures to reduce the impact of identified vulnerabilities

Vulnerability mitigation measures are actions taken to manage risks and to monitor a situation that has been identified on a permanent or regular basis.

Vulnerability detected	Risk mitigation measures	Expected impact
Insufficient promotion and use of cultural and religious tourism potential	Participation of local economic agents (especially those in the tourism, hospitality and food industries) in promoting the objectives of cultural and religious tourism	high
Lack of well-defined and promoted tourist routes	Creation of integrated tourist products to take advantage of as many of the tourist attractions of the area as possible	high
The default definition of the cross-border area as a transit tourism area is the dominant form of tourism to the detriment of other forms	Redefining the cross-border area as a recreation area, using the defining elements for cultural and religious tourism (creating tourist routes; exploiting the opportunities offered by cycling tourism; promoting the tourist offer through online and offline methods)	high
Lack of promotion and visibility of certain tourist purposes	Promotion of the tourist offer through online and offline methods - website, social media pages, brochures, local leaders, tour operators, marking tourist goals, with the help of local authorities	high
Lack of promotion of cultural and religious activities and traditions	Promotion of the tourist offer through online and offline methods - website, social media pages, brochures, local leaders	high
Poorly developed infrastructure and services in the tourism sector in Giurgiu County, Romania	Investments in infrastructure and services through access to grants, including the INTERREG VI-A RO-BG programme	high
Lack of programmes for the development of cross-border tourism	Access to non-recoverable funds, including the INTERREG VI-A RO-BG programme	high
Poorly developed leisure infrastructure	Access to non-recoverable funds, including the INTERREG VI-A RO-BG programme	high
Competition in the tourism sector of the international and regional market	Analysis of the competitive market and outline of an integrated tourism strategy for the cross-border area	high
Uncoordinated tourism	Development of tourist infrastructure and establishment of integrated strategies through access to non-recoverable funds, including the INTERREG V-A RO-BG programme	high
Deterioration of cultural and natural heritage	Access to non-recoverable funds, including the INTERREG VI-A RO-BG programme	high

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## Chapter 4. Presentation of ways to sustainable use of cultural and religious tourism resources in the cross-border area to promote and develop this type of tourism

### 4.1. Ways to make sustainable use of cultural and religious tourism resources in the Ruse-Giurgiu cross-border area

Cultural tourism is one of the main forms of sustainable tourism. The latter is defined, according to the literature, since 1991 by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the World Nature Fund, and the European Federation of National and Natural Parks as "the development of all forms of tourism, tourism management and marketing that respect the natural, social and economic integrity of the environment, ensuring the exploitation of natural and cultural resources for future generations" (National Strategy for the Development of Ecotourism in Romania 2018-2027, \*).

Also, another definition of sustainable tourism, this time by the World Tourism Organization, refers to "tourism whose development meets the needs of current tourists and host regions, while protecting and increasing the chances and opportunities for the future; it is seen as a way of managing all resources so that economic, social and aesthetic needs are fully met while maintaining cultural integrity, essential environmental dimensions, biodiversity and the living system.

**The tourist**, according to the same organisation, *is defined as any person who moves to a place outside the normal residence for less than 12 months and whose main reasons for travel are different from the pursuit of a paid activity in the visited place; therefore people who:*

- take a walk (vacation, leave);
- travel to resorts with mineral springs or to improve health;
- travel to other settlements to participate in or participate in sports competitions;
- travel for professional purposes, i.e. participate in international conferences, scientific meetings or religious missions, etc. ;
- cultural purposes (Nistoreanu P., 2005).

Also, in the case of this study, the development of sustainable tourism involves identifying and correlating the impact at political, social, economic, cultural, and tourist levels. **Impact** means an analysis of the relationship **between tourist - tourist resource - tourist product**, which takes place from the simple visit to a tourist purpose to the provision of the package of services and tourist actions.

The impact on a tourist area is generated by: the natural environment and the variety of tourist potential, the availability of a common infrastructure to provide traffic, access and information, and the availability of structures for accommodation of tourists, catering, and leisure.



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These elements can determine positive or negative forms of impact, as can be seen below (Nistoreanu P.T., 2000).

(a) ) **political impact** - determined by the position of tourism in the government's hospitality policy;

(b) **social impact** - manifested by the impact that tourism has on the traditional way of life of the inhabitants of a community, on the expansion of their spiritual and professional horizons;

- ✚ **the positive impact** can be: increasing employment opportunities by creating new jobs, creating seasonal jobs, developing social progress, reducing disparities in citizens' incomes, ensuring an understanding of multiculturalism, taking into account the different typologies and different cultures of tourists, by reducing social, linguistic, religious, cultural barriers, etc.;

- ✚ **the negative impact** can consist of: disrupting and gradually destroying the traditional way of life in communities, acceptance by the local population of some negative influences in the social plan;

(c) **economic impact** - materialised in the local and regional development of less economically resourced settlements, the economic impact is the volume of all tourist costs;

- ✚ **the positive impact** consists in: increasing the viability of settlements with the low volume of natural resources, increasing economic potential by attracting new revenues in the local budget generated from collecting taxes and fees, promoting traditional activities, developing specific trade based on the local economy and craft products, attracting new investments to modernize tourist goals, etc.;

- ✚ **the negative impact** consists of increasing pressure on resource exploitation, gradually destroying the environment, increasing pollution as a result of the use of certain non-working technologies;

(d) **cultural impact** - dominated by the relations between tourists and the local population;

- ✚ **the positive impact** consists of the development and revitalization of cultural and religious traditions, diversification of crafts, increasing the interest of the population in preserving the goals of tourist, natural and cultural interests, initiating cultural and religious actions, worship in monasteries;

- ✚ **the negative impact** consists in the emergence of changes in the mentality, the moral values of citizens due to tourists, the maintenance of certain traditions or customs just because they are to the taste of tourists; adaptation by residents or copying new behaviours attributed to tourists; increasing the cost of living, gradually destroying social spontaneity, at the local level;

(e) **tourist impact** - there are two forms:

- ✚ **the positive impact** lies in: increasing the number of accommodation structures, increasing the number of catering establishments by supporting local initiatives to benefit from traditional cuisine and using specific local products, creating adequate and diverse conditions for leisure and entertainment, developing specific trade-in craft products, albums, leaflets, etc., modernization of the main means of communication and access to tourist attractions, development of forms of tourism of



a seasonal nature, which can be practised during the rest of the year, raising local incomes;

- ✚ **the negative** impact lies in: the destructive effect of tourists on tourist resources caused by: uncontrolled tourist traffic, lack of specific facilities, the destruction caused by road tourism, intensive exploitation of natural resources with tourist values, lack of facilities for the use of renewable energy by tourism reception structures, catering. effects are the tendency to expand tourist structures and services, in the absence of complex use of existing structures, increasing the degree of urbanization of settlements, oversaturation of existing tourist infrastructure and diversification of forms of pollution due to an extended flow of tourists.

In addition to highlighting and identifying the type of impact created by the implementation of a specific recommendation in the field of tourism to develop recommendations for the sustainable use of cultural and religious resources in a given area, it is also necessary to consider the principles of sustainable tourism, regardless of the type of tourism in the field of interest.

- ✓ tourist activity must be carried out with the means of the local community having control over tourist development;
- ✓ creating new jobs at the local community level, leading to an increase in the quality of life of the local population, while ensuring a balance between existing economic activities and tourism;
- ✓ the need to establish a code of practice in tourism at all levels (national, regional, local) based on recognised international standards; at the same time, guidelines may be established for tourist operators, monitoring different tourist activities, as well as setting acceptable limits for certain areas. ;
- ✓ development of educational programmes and training to improve management in the field of the conservation of natural and cultural resources.

## 4.2. Description and potential of integrated tourism products proposed to be developed through the project

As the name suggests, **the integrated tourist** product consists of a set of services grouped to be a global response to the expectations of tourists.

Based on the content of the general product concept, the tourist product is defined as a set of material goods and services capable of satisfying a person's tourist needs between the time of departure and the time of arrival at the place of departure.



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**Figure 33: Logo on project RO-BG 302**



Source: "Joint strategy for the preservation and sharing of cultural, religious and historical heritage as a basis for sustainable development of the joint activities of religious (pilgrimage) and cultural tourism in the Cross-Border Region of Ruse-Giurgiu"

Therefore, the integrated tourist product consists of both tangible goods and services.

<b>Goods</b>	<i>The heritage of cultural resources - is a tourist attraction</i>
	<i>Tourist infrastructure (hotels, restaurants) - is to support the motivation to choose a destination</i>
	<i>Access facilities (communication channels routes) - is the way to achieve the desired tourist goals</i>
<b>Basic services</b>	<i>Transport services</i>
	<i>Accommodation and catering services</i>
	<i>Recreational services</i>
<b>Additional services</b>	<i>Organization of tourist consumption and tourist information services</i>
	<i>Other special services - translation</i>
	<i>Mediation of reservations and organization of tourist routes</i>



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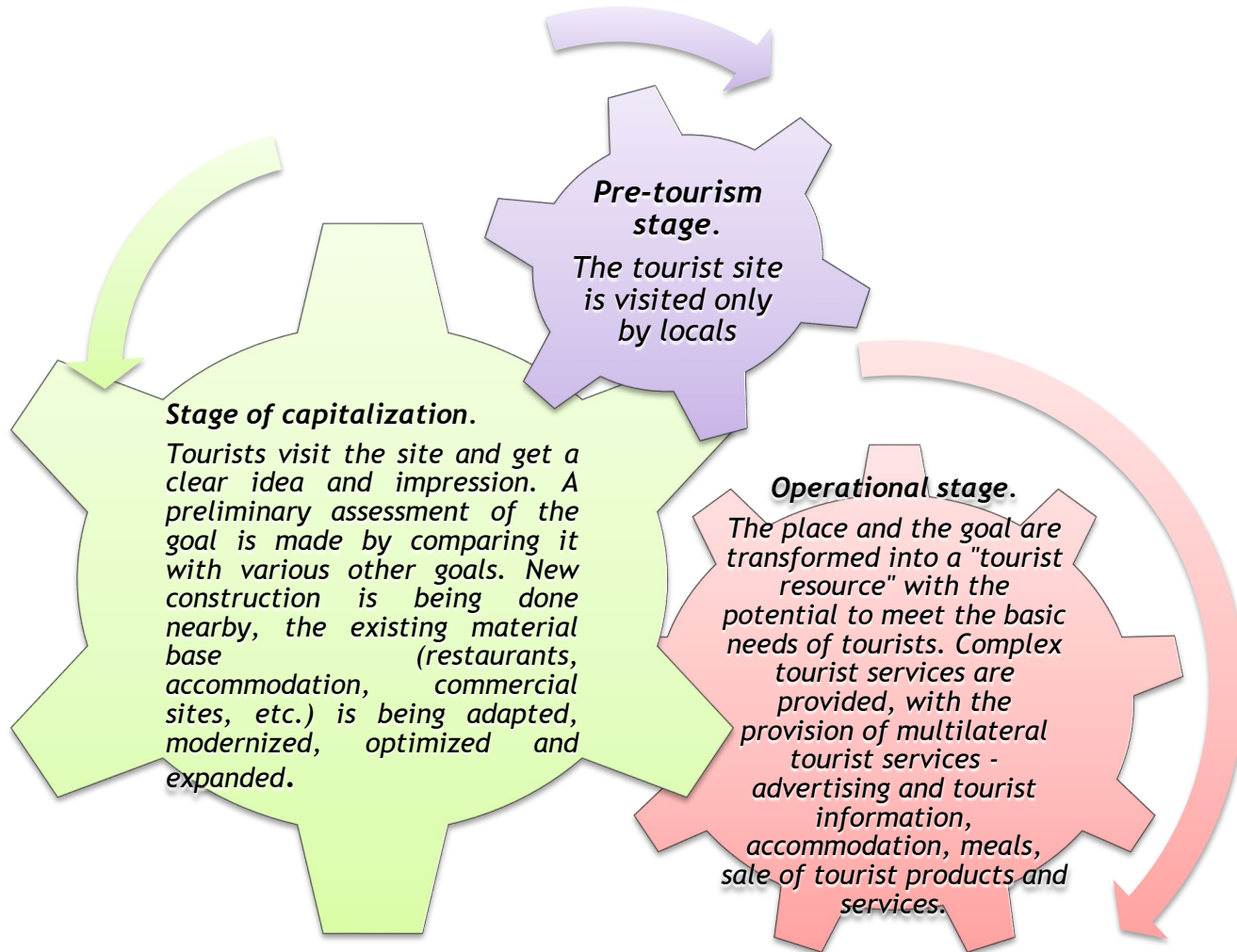
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At the same time, an important step in the identification and promotion of cultural and religious tourist tourism resources is the development of a Strategy for general preservation and use of cultural and historical heritage, aimed at supporting the joint development of cultural and religious tourism in Ruse - Cross-border region Giurgiu was developed by the team of the Association "European Center of Culture", in implementation of Contract No. ROBG - 456-122 / 15.11.2019 on "Joint strategy for the preservation and sharing of cultural, religious and historical heritage as a basis for the sustainable development of joint religious (pilgrimage) and cultural tourist activity in the cross-border region of Ruse-Giurgiu", In the

<sup>30</sup> Adapted by the author on the basis of the information contained in the "General strategy for the preservation and sharing of cultural and religious and historical heritage as a basis for the sustainable development of joint religious (pilgrimage) and cultural and tourist activity in the Ruse-Giurgiu Cross -border region", available in Romanian at the <http://christ-ro-bg.eu/>, consulted on 01.09.2021.



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framework of the implementation of the project "Christian Heritage along the Cultural Corridor Ruse-Giurgiu" ), e-MS code: ROBG-302, funded by INTERREG VA Romania Programme - Bulgaria 2014-2020.<sup>31</sup>

The development of the document was necessary because tourism is a key sector in the development of the Cross-Border Region, and in particular tourism related to the use of cultural and historical religious heritage, as repeated in strategic and legislative documents developed at different levels of government. that unique tourist attractions go beyond the boundaries imposed by the cross-border dimension and are largely unknown outside local communities.

Cultural and historical tourism is one of the largest and most profitable sectors in tourism. Cultural, historical and religious tourist attractions, rituals, rituals and traditions are essential elements that attract tourists and also contribute to the development of the economy.

For most of the 20th century, tourism and culture were analysed as separate aspects of destinations. Cultural resources are perceived as part of the historical heritage of the regions, as related to the education of the local population and the basis of local and national identity. *Tourism, on the other hand, is largely seen as an entertainment activity.* This perception has gradually changed, with the role of culture in attracting tourists becoming more apparent. The culture is used as an aspect of the tourist product and a strategy for presenting the destination. Tourism is integrated into cultural development and supports the preservation of heritage. **This interaction between tourism and culture is seen as one of the most important reasons for promoting the direct link between these two elements.**<sup>32</sup>

Cultural and historical tourism means types of tourism motivated by an interest in material and intangible heritage. Religious tourism is also a specific form of tourism to familiarize itself with the religious and cultural heritage and to familiarize yourself with the history of certain religious, religious and historical, archaeological and architectural tourist attractions, with or without participation in religious festive events. places of worship or tourist destinations; visiting religious places and sites motivated mainly by satisfying certain spiritual needs and journeys (pilgrimages) to worship holy sites or participate in religious rituals, regardless of the artistic value of places or events.

In the Ruse-Giurgiu cross-border region, there are common resources with the potential for the development of cultural and religious tourism, which are not used uniformly, integrating the cross-border dimension and an overview of development.

To meet this integrated vision, the study presents three integrated tourist products, with tourist routes, for cultural and religious tourism, based on the elements of the common cultural and religious heritage in the cross-border area Ruse-Giurgiu.

The churches of St. Petka, St. George in Ruse and st. Panteleimon in Vedeia will be included in new tourist routes and integrated into existing ones through their diversification.

<sup>31</sup> "The common strategy for the preservation and sharing of cultural, religious and historical heritage as a basis for the sustainable development of the joint activities of religious (pilgrimage) and cultural tourism in Cross-border region Ruse-Giurgiu' available in Romanian on the <http://christ-ro-bg.eu/>

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#### 4.1.1 "Christian cultural heritage in the spiritual space Ruse-Giurgiu"

*The Ruse-Giurgiu Euroregion* is a crossroads of some of the so-called cultural corridors in Southeastern Europe.

Thus, the Ruse-Giurgiu Cultural Corridor is an area with a rich cultural, religious and historical heritage, internationally known, including a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The heritage of the Ruse-Giurgiu Euroregion has cross-border dimensions with great potential and its capitalisation can offer a new strength for the development of cross-border tourism.

The existing tourist routes include only some of the most famous sites in the Ruse-Giurgiu region, such as the Ivanovo Rock Churches, the Basarbovo Monastery, the medieval fortress and the town of Cherven, the Comana Monastery, and the historical site near Culgereni.

In the cultural corridor Ruse-Giurgiu, however, there are 3 other churches with unique architectural and artistic ensembles with huge potential for tourism development - the Church of St. Petka, the Church of St. George in Ruse and the Church of St. Panteleimon" in Comuna Vedeia (Giurgiu region), which required restoration work.

Through the ChristHeritage RO-BG 302 project, these cultural and religious sites have been restored, works that are underway at the time of preparation of this study, following the images presented in Chapter 2.2. *Presentation of the Ruse-Giurgiu Cultural Corridor in terms of cultural and religious heritage.*

**INTEGRATED TRAVEL PRODUCT 1**

**"Christian cultural heritage in the spiritual space Ruse-Giurgiu"**

**Sites included in Giurgiu County :**

1. *Strumbu Geiseni Monastery*
2. *Otherenescu Church, near the village of Steneșto*
3. *Drumanescu Church*
4. *Comana Monastery*
5. *Church of St. Nicholas Martyrs Brankovini*
6. *St. Velycomenik Georgi Monastery*
7. *Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary*
8. *Monastyr St. John of Russia*
9. *St. Pantelemon's Church, Vedeia*

**Sites included in the Ruse region:**

1. *Church of St. Petka, Ruse*
2. *Church of St. George, Ruse*
3. *Holy Trinity Church, Ruse*
4. *Monastery of St. Marina, Karan Verbovka*
5. *Ivanovo Rock Churches*
6. *Monastery of St. Dimitar Basarbovski*



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## PROPOSAL FOR ROUTE 1 - TOUR

Continuation	2 days
Included Objects	<p><b>Sites included in Giurgiu County:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strumbu Geiseni Monastery</li> <li>2. Otherenescu Church, near the village of Steneșto</li> <li>3. Dragonescu Church</li> <li>4. Comana Monastery</li> <li>5. Church of St. Nicholas Martyrs Brankovini</li> <li>6. The Monastery of St. Veliko Martyr Georgi</li> <li>7. Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary</li> <li>8. Myastyr St. John of Russia</li> <li>9. St. Panteleimon Church, Wedeia</li> </ol> <p><b>Sites included in the Ruse region:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Church of St. Petka, Ruse</li> <li>11. Church of St. George, Ruse</li> <li>12. Holy Trinity Church, Ruse</li> <li>13. Monastery of St. Marina, Karan Verbovka</li> <li>14. Ivanovo Rock Churches</li> <li>15. Monastery of St. Dimitar Basarbovski</li> </ol>
Route logistics	<p><b>DAY 1.</b></p> <p>Starting point: Strumbu Geiseni Monastery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop 1: Otherenescu Church, near the village of Stoenes (8 km away, 11 min)</li> <li>• Stop 2: Drumanescu Church (30 km, 36 minutes)</li> <li>• Stop 3: Comana Monastery (40 km, 45 min.)</li> <li>• Stop 4: Church of St. Martyrs Brankovini (28 miles away, 50 min.)</li> <li>• Stop 5: Monastery of St. Veliko Martyr Georgi, Giurgiu (5 km, 10 minutes)</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Stop 6: Assumption Cathedral, Giurgiu (2.5 miles, 7 min.)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 7: Monastery Saint John of Russia (9 km, 15 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 8: St. Nicholas Church Panteleimon, Vedea (9.3 miles, 15 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 9: St. Petka's Church, Ruse (38 km, 40 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 10: St. George's Church, Ruse (1.5 km, 5 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 11: Holy Trinity Church, Ruse (2.5 km, 10 minutes)</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Accommodation on the Danube River</u></p> <p>DAY 2.</p> <p><i>Starting point: Holy Trinity Church, Ruse</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Stop 1: Monastery of St. Marina, Karan Verbovka (50 km, 60 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 2: The Rocky Churches of Ivanovo (23.6 miles, 40 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 3: Monastery of St. Dimitar Basarbovski (16 km, 20 minutes)</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Return: Strumbu Gieseni Monastery (116 km, 120 minutes)</i></p>
Distance travelled	418 km, 2-day route (198 km day 1; 220 km day 2)
Resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural resources - visited sites</li> <li>• Tourist infrastructure (hotels, restaurants)</li> <li>• Access facilities - as appropriate, minibus, bus, cruise ship, depending on the number of tourists included in the tourist route</li> <li>• Tourist consumption organization and tourist information services - tour guide, travel agency</li> <li>• Depending on the visiting group, other special services - translation</li> <li>• Promotional materials</li> </ul>
Target groups	tourists present on cruise ships arriving in the cross-border region of Ruse-Giurgiu organized groups and individual tourists visiting Ruse and Giurgiu for cultural tourism purposes, Romanian tourists passing through the town of Ruse on their way to the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, mountain resorts, etc. Bulgarian citizens passing through Giurgiu.
Ways to promote	<p>The website promoting integrated travel products <a href="http://www.christ-ro-bg.eu">www.christ-ro-bg.eu</a></p> <p>Brochures distributed on cruise ships in the Giurgiu-Ruse cross-border area</p>
About the	The tourist product defines in itself the obtaining of an image of uniqueness, being different from similar competing



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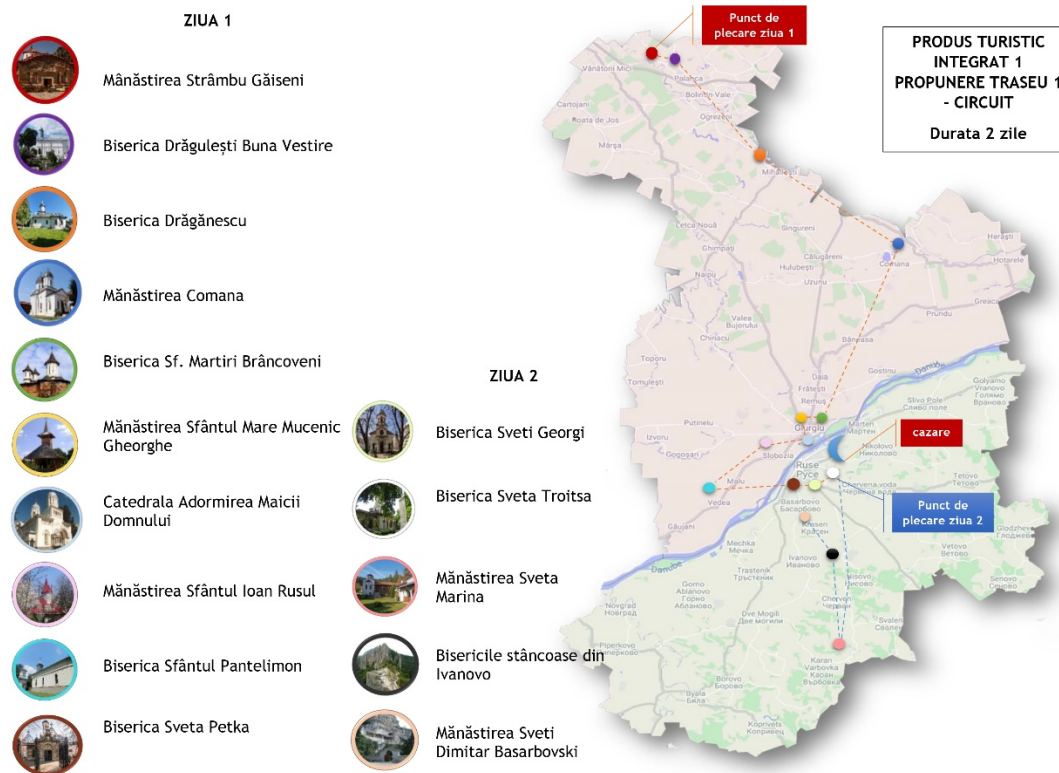
integrated  
product

travel

tourist products in that it is an appropriate organization for both tourists specific to cultural and religious tourism, as well as for travel agencies and guides who start the complex route with a theme. well defined cultural and religious heritage, respectively "Christian cultural heritage in the spiritual space Ruse-Giurgiu"

Accommodation - selected at random, tailored to the Logistics of the route - on the Danube coast; the accommodation will be selected by the operators when implementing the integrated tourist products.

Tourist route map



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	Source: Author
<b>OFFER PER ITINERARY 2</b>	
<b>Continuation</b>	1 day
<b>Included Objects</b>	<p>Sites included in Giurgiu County:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Otherenescu Church, near the village of Steneșto</i></li> <li>2. <i>Monastery St. John Of Russia, Giurgiu.</i></li> <li>3. <i>St. Panteleimon Church, Wedeia</i></li> <li>4. <i>Church of St. Nicholas Martyrs Brankovini, Giurgiu</i></li> </ol> <p>Ruse Province:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. <i>Holy Trinity Church, Ruse</i></li> <li>6. <i>Church of St. Petka, Ruse</i></li> <li>7. <i>Church of St. George, Ruse</i></li> </ol>
<b>Route logistics</b>	<p>Starting point: Punenescu Church, near the village of Steneșto</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Stop 1: Monastery St. John of Russia (50 km, 60 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 2: St. Nicholas Church Panteleimon, Vedea (9.3 miles, 15 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 3: Church of St. Martyrs Brankovini (12.4 miles, 25 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 4: St. Petka Church, Ruse (17 km, 30 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 5: St. George's Church, Ruse (1.5 km, 5 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 6: Holy Trinity Church, Ruse (2.5 km, 10 minutes)</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Lunch on the Danube coast</u></p> <p>Return: Otherenescu Church, near the village of Steneșto (50 km, 60 minutes)</p>
<b>Distance travelled</b>	156 km, 1-day route
<b>Resources needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural resources - visited sites</li> <li>• Tourist infrastructure (hotels, restaurants)</li> <li>• Access facilities - as appropriate, minibus, bus, cruise ship, depending on the number of tourists included in the tourist route</li> <li>• Tourist consumption organization and tourist information services - tour guide, travel agency</li> <li>• Depending on the visiting group, other special services - translation</li> <li>• Promotional materials</li> </ul>
<b>Target groups</b>	tourists present on cruise ships arriving in the cross-border region of Ruse-Giurgiu organized groups and individual



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	tourists visiting Ruse and Giurgiu for cultural tourism purposes, Romanian tourists passing through the town of Ruse on their way to the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, mountain resorts, etc. Bulgarian citizens passing through Giurgiu.
Ways to promote	The website promoting integrated travel products <a href="http://www.christ-ro-bg.eu">www.christ-ro-bg.eu</a> Brochures distributed on cruise ships in the Giurgiu-Ruse cross-border area
About the tourist product	The tourist product defines in itself the obtaining of an image of uniqueness, being different from similar competing tourist products in that it is an appropriate organization for both tourists specific to cultural and religious tourism, as well as for travel agencies and guides who start the complex route with a theme. well defined cultural and religious heritage, <b>respectively "Christian cultural heritage in the spiritual space Ruse-Giurgiu"</b>
Tourist route map	<div><div><p>Biserica Drugănescu</p></div><div><p>Mănăstirea Sfântul Ioan Rusul</p></div><div><p>Biserica Sfântul Pantelimon</p></div><div><p>Biserica Sf. Martiri Brâncoveni</p></div><div><p>Biserica Sveta Petka</p></div><div><p>Biserica Sveti Georgi</p></div><div><p>Biserica Sveta Troitsa</p></div></div> <div><div><b>PRODUS TURISTIC INTEGRAT 1</b> <b>PROPUNERE TRASEU 1</b> <b>Durata 1 zi</b></div></div>



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Source: Author



#### 4.2.1 Following in the footsteps of the Saints of the Romanian and Bulgarian people

A faith, a prayer, but also similar customs, close to the hearts of the believers of the Bulgarian and Romanian people, connect the saints of Bulgaria and Romania, a sacred, secular relationship in which Bulgaria and Romania are common spiritual spaces.

The Holy Prayer of the Holy Pious Parasksteva (Petka) watches over the faithful, and her relics, laid in the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin in Iasi, Romania, are a gracious source of healing of spiritual life. His worship is unceasing, it does not stop from the opening to the closing of the gates of the temple, "for she, leaving mortal life, has acquired incorruption forever; therefore, by God's command, he finds glory for grace and miracles "(Kontakion, ch. 6).

The oldest Rousse church - the church "St. Georgi", built between 1841 and 1843, is preserved as part of the relics of St. George, declared the patron saint of the whole city. Also, the name of the town of Giurgiu is associated with St. George. The 14th-century city of Giurgiu is an important port on the Danube, frequented by Genoese merchants who named it after the patron saint of Genoa, St. George (San Giorgio).

The name Giurgiu is also preserved in the folk song of Northeastern Bulgaria. An essential specificity in the name "Giurgiu" is its character of a toponym name - a ***name that preserves the memory of the religious history of the community***.

It is a known fact that the protector of the military-youth units after the acceptance of Christianity by the Bulgarians was St. George. This quality of the saint - to protect young warriors, is the reason for the replacement of the previous local (pre-Christian) protector of Russia - the Blonde Virgin Mary with St. George, a reality that subordinates the realities of the 9th century. Giurgiu is also home to St. Nicholas Episcopal Cathedral. Georgi and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary" and the Monastery of St. George.



In 1774, during one of the Russo-Turkish wars, Russian General Petar Saltikov ordered the relics of St. Dimitar to be taken to Russia, but as compensation for the losses of the Romanian people in the war, these holy powers rested in Bucharest, in the Church of Three Saints.

INTEGRATED TRAVEL PRODUCT 2

" ON THE TRAIL OF THE SAINTS OF THE ROMANIAN PEOPLE AND THE BULGARIAN PEOPLE"

Sites included in Giurgiu County :

1. *Monastery of St. Veliko Martyr Georgi, Giurgiu*
2. *Church of St. Panteleimon, Vedeia*
3. *Giurgiu Fortress*
4. *Church of St. Martyrs Brunkovini (Giurgiu)*

Sites included in the Ruse region:

1. *Monastery of St. Dimitar Basarbovski*
2. *Church of St. Petka, Ruse*
3. *Church of St. George, Ruse*
4. *Ruse historical and cultural sites: Ruse Pantheon*
5. *Ivanovo Rock Churches*
6. *Restaurants with typical regional food from Veliko Tarnovo*



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## PROPOSAL FOR ROUTE 1 - TOUR

Continuation	2 days
Included Objects	<p>Sites included in Giurgiu County:</p> <p><i>Monastery of St. Veliko Martyr Georgi, Giurgiu</i></p> <p><i>Church of St. Panteleimon, Vedeia</i></p> <p><i>Giurgiu Fortress</i></p> <p><i>Church of St. Martyrs Brankovini (Giurgiu)</i></p> <p>Ruse Province:</p> <p><i>Manastir St. Dimitar Basarbovski</i></p> <p><i>Church of St. Petka, Ruse</i></p> <p><i>Church of St. George, Ruse</i></p> <p><i>Historical and cultural sites in Ruse, respectively: Ruse Pantheon, Ivanovo Rock Churches</i></p> <p><i>Restaurants with typical regional food, in the region of Veliko Tarnovo</i></p>
Route logistics	<p>DAY 1.</p> <p>Starting point: Manastir Saint Dimitar Basarbovski</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Stop 1: St. George's Church, Ruse (10 km away, 15 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 2: St. Petka Church, Ruse (1.5 km away, 5 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 3: St. Nicholas Church Panteleimon, Vedeia (23.6 miles away, 40 minutes)</i></li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stop 4: Church of St. Martyrs Brankovini (12.4 miles away, 25 minutes)</b></li> <li>• <b>Stop 5: Monastery of St. Veliko Martyr Georgi, Giurgiu (4 km distance, 10 minutes)</b></li> <li>• <b>Stop 6: Giurgiu Fortress (5 km distance, 10 minutes)</b></li> <li>• <b>Stop 7: Pantheon Ruse (18 km distance, 20 minutes)</b></li> </ul> <p><u><b>Accommodation on the Danube River</b></u></p> <p><b>DAY 2.</b></p> <p><b>Starting point: Ruse Pantheon</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stop 1: Ivanovo Rock Churches (30 km, 40 minutes)</b></li> <li>• <b>Stop 2: Veliko Tarnovo Region - (100 km, 1 hour and 30 minutes)</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Return: Monastery of St. Dimitar Basarbovski (100 km, 1 hour 30 minutes)</b></p>
<b>Distance travelled</b>	326.5 km, 2-day route (96.5 km day 1, 230 km day 2)
<b>Resources needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious resources - the visited purposes related to the elements of religious identity represented by the Saints</li> <li>• Tourist infrastructure (hotels, restaurants)</li> <li>• Access facilities - as appropriate, minibus, bus, cruise ship, depending on the number of tourists included in the tourist route</li> <li>• Tourist consumption organization and tourist information services - tour guide, travel agency</li> <li>• Depending on the visiting group, other special services - translation</li> <li>• Promotional materials</li> </ul>
<b>Target groups</b>	tourists present on cruise ships arriving in the Cross-border region of Ruse - Giurgiu, organized groups and individual tourists visiting Ruse and Giurgiu for religious tourism purposes, Romanian tourists passing through the town of Ruse on their way to the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, mountain resorts, etc. Bulgarian citizens passing through Giurgiu.
<b>Ways to promote</b>	<p>The website promoting integrated travel products <a href="http://www.christ-ro-bg.eu">www.christ-ro-bg.eu</a></p> <p>Brochures distributed on cruise ships in the Giurgiu-Ruse cross-border area</p>











## About the tourist product

It is a specialized tourist product for tourists practising religious tourism.

Legend: Accommodation - selected at random, tailored to the Logistics of the route - on the Danube coast; the accommodation will be selected by the operators when implementing the integrated tourist products.

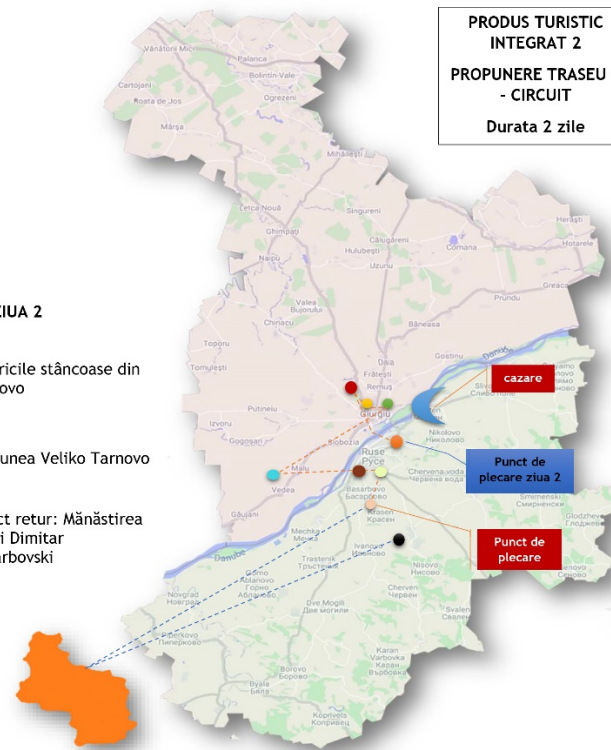
## Tourist route map

### ZIUA 1

-  Mănăstirea Sveti Dimitar Basarbovski
-  Biserica Sveti Georgi
-  Biserica Sveta Petka
-  Biserica Sf. Pantelimon, Vedeia
-  Biserica Sf. Martiri Brâncoveni
-  Mănăstirea Sfântul Mare Mucenic Gheorghe
-  Cetatea din Giurgiu
-  Panteonul din Ruse

### ZIUA 2

-  Bisericile stâncoase din Ivanovo
-  Regiunea Veliko Tarnovo
-  Punct retur: Mănăstirea Sveti Dimitar Basarbovski



Source: Author



OFFER PER ITINERARY 2	
Continuation	1 day
Included Objects	<p>Sites included in Giurgiu County:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>St. Panteleimon Church, Vedeia</i></li> </ol> <p>Ruse Province:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Monastery of St. Dimitar Basarbovski</i></li> <li>2. <i>Church of St. Petka, Ruse</i></li> <li>3. <i>Church of St. George, Ruse</i></li> <li>4. <i>Historical and cultural sites in Ruse, respectively: Ruse Pantheon</i></li> <li>5. <i>Ivanovo Rock Churches</i></li> <li>6. <i>Restaurants with typical regional food, in the region of Veliko Tarnovo</i></li> </ol>
Route logistics	<p>Starting point: Veliko Tarnovo region - <i>local breakfast</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Stop 1: Monastery of St. Dimitar Basarbovski (100 km, 1 hour and 30 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 2: St. George's Church, Ruse (10 km away, 15 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 3: St. Petka's Church, Ruse (0.9 miles away, 5 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 3: St. Nicholas Church Panteleimon, Vedeia (23.6 miles away, 40 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 5: Pantheon Ruse (35 km distance, 40 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 6: Ivanovo Rock Churches (15 km, 20 minutes)</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Return: Veliko Tarnovo region - (100 km, 1 hour and 30 minutes)</i></p>
Distance travelled	299.5 km, 1-day route
Resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious resources - the visited purposes related to the elements of religious identity represented by the Saints</li> <li>• Tourist infrastructure (hotels, restaurants)</li> <li>• Access facilities - as appropriate, minibus, bus, cruise ship, depending on the number of tourists included in the tourist route</li> <li>• Tourist consumption organization and tourist information services - tour guide, travel agency</li> <li>• Depending on the visiting group, other special services - translation</li> </ul> <p>Promotional materials</p>
Target groups	tourists present on cruise ships arriving in the Cross-border region of Ruse - Giurgiu, organized groups and individual tourists visiting Ruse and Giurgiu for religious tourism purposes, Romanian tourists passing through the town of Ruse on their way to the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, mountain resorts, etc. Bulgarian citizens passing through Giurgiu.



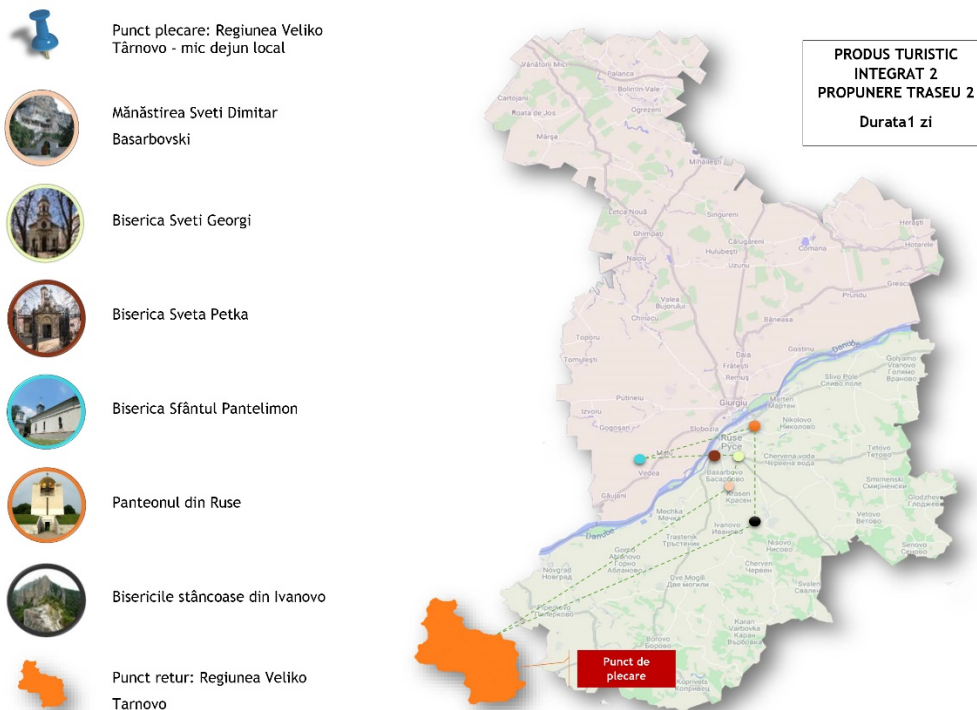
### Ways to promote

The website promoting integrated travel products [www.christ-ro-bg.eu](http://www.christ-ro-bg.eu)  
Brochures distributed on cruise ships in the Giurgiu-Ruse cross-border area

### About the tourist product

It is a specialized tourist product for tourists practising religious tourism.

### Tourist route map



Source: Author



#### 4.3.1. History and civilization in the Ruse-Giurgiu cultural corridor

The Ruse-Giurgiu Euroregion is currently the largest urban community on the Romanian-Bulgarian border and a major transport hub between the two countries, which became full members of the European Union in 2007 and further to the markets in the Mediterranean and Asia Minor region. connecting Northern and Western Europe with Asia. The Ruse-Giurgiu Euroregion has an area of 517.8 km<sup>2</sup> and includes two urban poles - Ruse Municipality (Bulgaria) and Giurgiu Municipality (Ruse), to which a small town - Marten - and 12 villages are added.<sup>33</sup>

**INTEGRATED TRAVEL PRODUCT 3**  
" History and civilization in the cultural corridor Ruse-Giurgiu "

**Sites included in Giurgiu County:**

- 1 . *Comana Monastery*
2. *Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, Giurgiu*
3. *Monastery of St. Veliko Martyr Georgi, Giurgiu*
4. *Sfantul Ioan Rusul Monastery, near Giurgiu*
5. *Giurgiu Fortress*
6. *Church of St. Panteleimon, Vedeia*
7. *Church of St. Martyrs Brunkovini (Giurgiu)*
8. *Otherenescu Church, near the village of Steneșto*

**Sites included in the Ruse region:**

1. *Holy Trinity Church, Ruse*
2. *Monastery of St. Marina, Village Karan Verbovka*
3. *Monastery of St. Dimitar Basarbovski*
4. *Ivanovo Rock Churches*
5. *The medieval town of Cherven*
6. *Church of St. Petka, Ruse*
7. *Church of St. George, Ruse*
8. *The Pantheon in Rousse*
9. *Settlement near the village of Pisanets*

<sup>33</sup> Investment profile of the Ruse-Giurgiu Euroregion, developed in the framework of the project "Operations in the Ruse-Giurgiu Euroregion - Opportunities for Integrated Management through implementation of the Master Plan", co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), through Romania Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Bulgaria, 2012, available on [https://obshtinaruse.bg/uploads/files/projects/MasterPlan/Invest\\_Profile\\_EN .pdf](https://obshtinaruse.bg/uploads/files/projects/MasterPlan/Invest_Profile_EN.pdf), available on 15.08.2021.



PROPOSAL FOR ROUTE 1 - TOUR	
Continuation	2 days
Included Objects	<p>Sites included in Giurgiu County:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Comana Monastery</li> <li>2. Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, Giurgiu</li> <li>3. Monastery of St. Veliko Martyr Georgi, Giurgiu</li> <li>4. Sfântul Ioan Rusul Monastery, near Giurgiu</li> <li>5. Giurgiu Fortress</li> <li>6. Church of St. Panteleimon, Vedea</li> <li>7. Church of St. Martyrs Brunkovini (Giurgiu)</li> <li>8. Otherenescu Church, near the village of Steneșto</li> </ol> <p>Sites included in the Ruse region:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Holy Trinity Church, Ruse</li> <li>10. Monastery of St. Marina, Karan Verbovka</li> <li>11. Monastery of St. Dimitar Basarbovski</li> <li>12. Ivanovo Rock Churches</li> <li>13. The medieval town of Cherven</li> <li>14. Church of St. Petka, Ruse</li> <li>15. Church of St. George, Ruse</li> <li>16. The Russian Pantheon</li> <li>17. Settlement near the village of Pisanets</li> </ol>
Route logistics	<p>DAY 1.</p> <p>Starting point: <i>The medieval town of Cherven</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Stop 1: Ivanovo Rock Churches (18 km distance, 20 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 2: Monastery of St. Dimitar Basarbovski (16 km away, 20 minutes)</i></li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Stop 3: St. George's Church, Ruse (10 km away, 15 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 4: St. Petka's Church, Ruse (0.9 miles away, 5 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 5: Holy Trinity Church, Ruse (3 km away, 10 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 6: Comana Monastery (55 km, 60 minutes)</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Accommodation in Comana monastery</i></p> <p><b>DAY 2.</b></p> <p><i>Starting point: Comana Monastery</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Stop 1: St. Nicholas Church Martyrs Brankovini (26.1 miles away, 50 min)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 2: Monastery of St. Veliko Martyr Georgi, Giurgiu (5 km distance, 10 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 3: Otherenescu Church, near the village of Stoenesh (38 km away, 40 min)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 4: Russian Monastery of St. John (50 km away, 60 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 5: St. Nicholas Church Panteleimon, Vedeia (9.3 miles away, 15 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 6: Pantheon Ruse (35 km, 50 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 7: Location at the Settlement near the village of Pisanets (38 km, 40 minutes)</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Return: Medieval town of Cherven (38 km, 40 minutes)</i></p>
<b>Distance travelled</b>	365.5 km 2-day route (103.5 km day 1, 262 km day 2)
<b>Resources needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural resources - visited sites</li> <li>• Tourist infrastructure (hotels, restaurants)</li> <li>• Access facilities - as appropriate, minibus, bus, cruise ship, depending on the number of tourists included in the tourist route</li> <li>• Tourist consumption organization and tourist information services - tour guide, travel agency</li> <li>• Depending on the visiting group, other special services - translation</li> <li>• Promotional materials</li> </ul>
<b>Target groups</b>	tourists present on cruise ships arriving in the border region of Ruse-Giurgiu, organized groups and individual tourists visiting Ruse and Giurgiu for cultural tourism purposes, and Romanian tourists passing through the town of Ruse on their way to the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, and mountain resorts, etc. Bulgarian citizens passing through Giurgiu.
<b>Ways to promote</b>	<p>The website promoting integrated travel products <a href="http://www.christ-ro-bg.eu">www.christ-ro-bg.eu</a></p> <p>Brochures distributed on cruise ships in the Giurgiu-Ruse cross-border area</p>
<b>About the tourist product</b>	The tourist product "History and Civilization in the Ruse-Giurgiu Cultural Corridor" is a wider tourist product in which churches and monasteries are considered sites of cultural and historical heritage, but the tourist product includes



### Tourist route map

other historical and cultural sites such as Ivanovo rock churches, and the medieval town of Cherven, Comana Monastery.

#### ZIUA 1



Orașul medieval Cherven



Bisericile stâncoase din Ivanovo



Biserica Sveti Georgi



Biserica Sveta Petka



Biserica Sveta Troitsa



Mănăstirea Comana

#### ZIUA 2



Mănăstirea Comana



Biserica Sf. Martiri Brâncoveni



Mănăstirea Sfântul Mare Mucenic Gheorghe



Biserica Drăgulești Buna Vestire



Mănăstirea Sfântul Ioan Rusul



Biserica Sfântul Pantelimon



Panteonul din Ruse



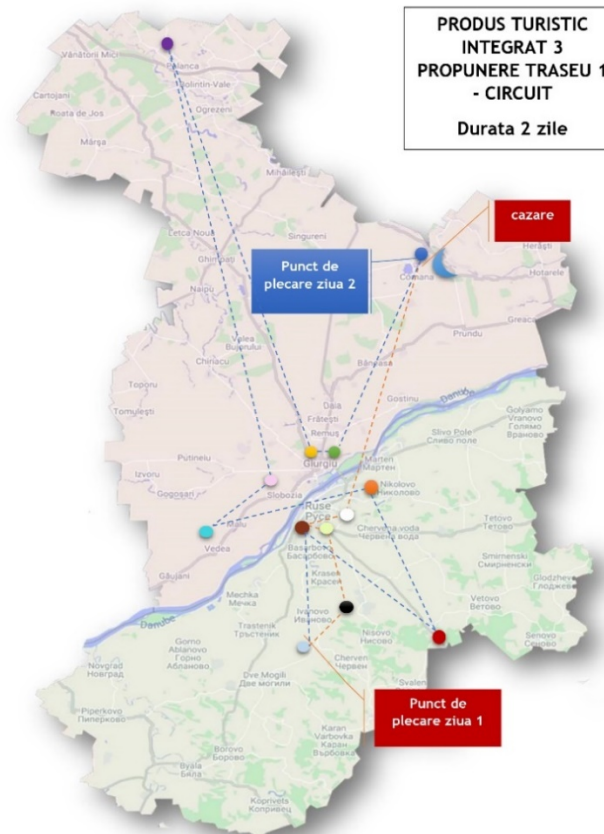
Așezarea de lângă satul Pisantes



Biserica Sveta Petka



Orașul medieval Cherven



Source: Author  
OFFER PER ITINERARY 2





<b>Continuation</b>	1 day
<b>Included Objects</b>	<p>Sites included in Giurgiu County:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Comana Monastery</i></li> <li>2. <i>Church of St. Panteleimon, Vedeia</i></li> <li>3. <i>Church of St. Martyrs Brunkovini (Giurgiu)</i></li> </ol> <p>Sites included in the Ruse region:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Monastery of St. Dimitar Basarbovski</i></li> <li>2. <i>Ivanovo Rock Churches</i></li> <li>3. <i>The medieval town of Cherven</i></li> <li>4. <i>Church of St. Petka, Ruse</i></li> <li>5. <i>Church of St. George, Ruse</i></li> <li>6. <i>The Russian Pantheon</i></li> </ol>
<b>Route logistics</b>	<p><b>DAY 1.</b></p> <p><b>Starting point: The medieval town of Cherven</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Stop 1: Ivanovo Rock Churches (18 km, 20 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 2: Monastery of St. Dimitar Basarbovski (16 km, 20 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 3: St. George's Church, Ruse (10 km away, 15 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 4: St. Petka's Church, Ruse (0.9 miles away, 5 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 5: Comana Monastery (55 km, 60 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 6: St. Nicholas Church Panteleimon, Vedeia (37.3 miles away, 70 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 7: Church of St. Martyrs Brankovini (12.4 miles away, 25 minutes)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stop 8: Pantheon Ruse (15 km, 30 minutes)</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Return: Medieval town of Cherven (38 km, 40 minutes)</b></p>
<b>Distance travelled</b>	233.5 km 1-day route
<b>Resources needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural resources - visited sites</li> <li>• Tourist infrastructure (hotels, restaurants)</li> <li>• Access facilities - as appropriate, minibus, bus, cruise ship, depending on the number of tourists included in the tourist route</li> <li>• Tourist consumption organization and tourist information services - tour guide, travel agency</li> <li>• Depending on the visiting group, other special services - translation</li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promotional materials</li></ul>
<b>Target groups</b>	tourists present on cruise ships arriving in the cross-border region of Ruse-Giurgiu organized groups and individual tourists visiting Ruse and Giurgiu for cultural tourism purposes, and Romanian tourists passing through the town of Ruse on their way to the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, mountainous resorts, etc. Bulgarian citizens passing through Giurgiu.
<b>Ways to promote</b>	The website promoting integrated travel products <a href="http://www.christ-ro-bg.eu">www.christ-ro-bg.eu</a> Brochures distributed on cruise ships in the Giurgiu-Ruse cross-border area
<b>About the tourist product</b>	The tourist product "History and Civilization in the Ruse-Giurgiu Cultural Corridor" is a broader tourist product in which churches and monasteries are considered sites of cultural and historical heritage, but the tourist product includes other historical and cultural sites such as Ivanovo rock churches, and the medieval town of Cherven, the Comana Monastery.
<b>Tourist route map</b>	



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Orașul medieval Cherven



Bisericile stâncoase din Ivanovo



Mănăstirea Sveti Dimitar Basarbovski



Biserica Sveta Petka



Mănăstirea Comana



Biserica Sf. Pantelimon, Vedeia



Biserica Sf. Martiri Brâncoveni



Panteonul din Ruse



Punct retur Orașul medieval Cherven



Source: Author





#### **4.3. Formulating recommendations on the search for integrated tourist products, which will include cultural and religious routes designed to promote heritage objectives rehabilitated through the project**

As stated in the introductory chapters, the main objectives of this study are to identify three *integrated* cross-border tourist products, including tourist routes designed to increase the number of tourists visiting the Ruse-Giurgiu area.

Based on the cross-border area analysis, recommendations for integrated tourism products were made and the recommendations were developed following the specific characteristics of customs in the cultural and religious spheres of the two areas of interest, taking into account the social, economic and cultural areas of these areas. Each of the two settlements benefits from a unique economic and social framework for each area, given the different history and economic and social development.

However, the two partner settlements have very similar elements of tradition and customs in form and content, from dancing to traditions and celebrations, but even some old crafts practised in both areas, including cultural development.

Therefore, when talking about integrated tourist products, in this cross-border area we need to take into account this accumulation of information about the unique and common features between the two interesting places.

The recommendations we can make take into account all previously identified traditions, customs and cultural and religious features accumulated with specific information about the geographical location of the two settlements, the economic and social development of each, but also their specific history.

##### **Recommendation I.**

###### **Continuation and improvement of cross-border relations between Russé and Giurgiu**

The two districts, Giurgiu County, Romania and Ruse region, Bulgaria, have shown a strong cross-border partnership, united by a combination of common cultural traditions and interests, such as the significant interest of local people and authorities in religious cultural heritage.

This partnership needs to be continued and improved culturally, as it is of great importance for the tourist situation of this cross-border area, cultural and religious tourism represents great potential and is an important source for attracting and developing cross-border tourism.

Thus, given the importance of religious cultural tourism for both communities and taking into account the principles of sustainable tourism highlighted in the previous



chapters, measures can be taken to improve this partnership in the field of religious cultural tourism by:

- ✚ establishing a code or common strategy for the development of religious cultural heritage to ensure the continuity of the cross-border partnership between the two communities;
- ✚ mutual promotion of integrated tourism products in these two communities.

### **Recommendation II.**

#### **Development of the elements of religious cultural tourism already present in both localities**

As mentioned above, a very important part of the religious-cultural tourism of the two regions is the presence of many cultural elements of great value, but also the presence of specific religious elements (from places of worship to cultural heritage created by the three saints revered at the community level: St. Paraskeva, St. George and St. Pantelei communities in this cross-border area that benefit from significant opportunities for cultural and religious development throughout their prism.

Therefore, the need to develop these elements of cultural tourism in both communities is clear to be able to create sustainable development of religious cultural tourism in this cross-border area.

The common elements described above must ensure long-term development so that the two settlements can make the most of the development of cultural tourism based on these elements the following measures can be identified to improve and develop the elements of religious cultural tourism from the Ruse-Giurgiu cross-border area:

- ✚ the creation of integrated tourist routes developed in this multicultural framework of cross-border partnership to attract new tourists to these two areas;
- ✚ establishment of cultural tourist centres in support of cultural routes and integrated tourist products;
- ✚ receiving investment for development and support of elements such as exhibitions, and workshops, which are an important factor in promoting religious cultural tourism in both areas.



### **Recommendation III.**

#### **Exchange of good practices**




Examples of good practice on key indicators to achieve positive results have been systematised. The following are the measures that can be taken to establish the exchange of practices between Giurgiu and Ruse and which have been selected in the context of this study:

Sustainability	Developing a coordinated strategy for strong partnerships with different bodies, as well as with stakeholders, is vital to ensure lasting and long-term economic and cultural benefits. The routes offer opportunities for tourism development, regional integration and economic development, but more importantly, they contribute to the sustainable development of tourism as they have the potential to distribute supply and demand to less promoted destinations.
Connectivity	Modern technological means can be used that provide a very interesting and complete representation of religious cultural purposes, with a high degree of attractiveness for all categories of public and at the same time providing equal opportunities for visitors (aimed at people with disabilities, these presentations of innovative methods).
Efficiency	It must be insured: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ cultural accessibility for all visitors of different ages, religions, values, etc. ;</li> <li>✚ accessibility in the space consisting of the provision of different facilities (e.g. ramps);</li> <li>✚ affordability - different opportunities need to be provided for people with different financial opportunities.</li> </ul>



#### 4.4. Formulation of recommendations for the promotion of created cultural and religious tourist products

Given the chosen approach, it is envisaged that the recommendations for the promotion of the created cultural and religious tourist products will be outlined for three periods:

-  2021-2023 (short-term);
-  2023-2025 (medium-term);
-  2026-2030 (long-term).

Guidelines for action	Activity	Resources	Time limits	Results
<b>D1: Establishment of tourist centres for integrated promotion</b>	Create promotional materials (brochures, guides) and distribute them in different online and offline environments (on cruise ships, for example)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ materials</li> <li>▪ human</li> <li>▪ Financial</li> <li>▪ Information</li> </ul>	2023-2025 (medium))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ raising the level of awareness of tourists;</li> </ul>
	Establishing partnerships with local economic actors to maximise the expected effect of promoting tourism		2023-2025 (medium))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ raising the level of awareness of tourists;</li> </ul>
<b>D2: Establishment of a website to promote Russe Giurgiu cross-border region and cultural and religious purposes in the area, including tourist routes</b>	Creating an online ticketing platform for religious cultural routes (integrated travel packages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ materials</li> <li>▪ human</li> <li>▪ Financial</li> <li>▪ Information</li> </ul>	2021-2023 (short-term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ raising the level of awareness of tourists;</li> </ul>
<b>D3: Establishment of educational workshops in which to disseminate cultural and religious information</b>	Establishment and promotion of workshops that tourists interested in cultural and religious tourism can access as a way to sustainably use cultural and religious resources in the border region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ materials</li> <li>▪ human</li> <li>▪ Financial</li> <li>▪ Information</li> </ul>	2026-2030 (long term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ raising the level of awareness of tourists;</li> </ul>



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<b><i>D4: Establishment of shops within churches included in cultural and religious routes</i></b>	Sale of religious items to tourists to promote cultural and religious tourist resources in the cross-border area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>materials</li> <li>human</li> <li>Financial</li> <li>Information</li> </ul>	2026-2030 (long term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>raising the level of awareness of tourists;</li> </ul>
<b><i>D5: Create exhibition-type events in churches</i></b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>materials</li> <li>human</li> <li>Financial</li> <li>Information</li> </ul>	2026-2030 (long-term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>raising the level of awareness of tourists;</li> </ul>

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## Conclusion

The purpose of this document was to carry out a study dedicated to the identification of three integrated cultural products.

The survey was carried out following the information available at the time of its production, received from the local authorities in Giurgiu and Ruse, from the specialized literature and the statistical documents of the public institutions on both sides.

In addition to the main objective of identifying integrated cultural products, the study analyses the economic, social and geographical situation of the two interesting areas to better identify the evolution of the specific characteristics of religious culture developed in the two regions.

An analysis of what constitutes religious cultural heritage, which are the common features of the two regions, counterfactual elements at the local level.

3 integrated tourist products have been developed, starting with the tourist goals that can be capitalized on in the border region, respectively:

- (1) "Christian cultural heritage in the spiritual space Ruse-Giurgiu"
- (2) Following in the footsteps of the Romanian and Bulgarian saints
- (3) History and civilization in the Cultural Corridor Ruse-Giurgiu

For each of the tourist products, alternatives were identified for their fertilization and a multi-arterial characteristic was carried out.

Based on all this information, three recommendations were developed in the search for integrated tourist products:

- continuing and improving cross-border relations;
- the development of elements of religious cultural tourism already present in both areas;
- exchange of good practices.

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## ANNEXES



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## Appendix 1 - Map of the tourist sites included in Integrated Tourist Product 1 - "Christian Cultural Heritage in the Spiritual Space Ruse-Giurgiu"



Mănăstirea Strâmbu Găiseni



Biserica Drăgulești Buna Vestire



Biserica Drăgănescu



Mănăstirea Comana



Biserica Sf. Martiri Brâncoveni



Mănăstirea Sfântul Mare Mucenic Gheorghe



Catedrala Adormirea Maicii Domnului



Mănăstirea Sfântul Ioan Rusul



Biserica Sfântul Pantelimon



Biserica Sveta Petka



Biserica Sveti Georgi



Biserica Sveta Troitsa



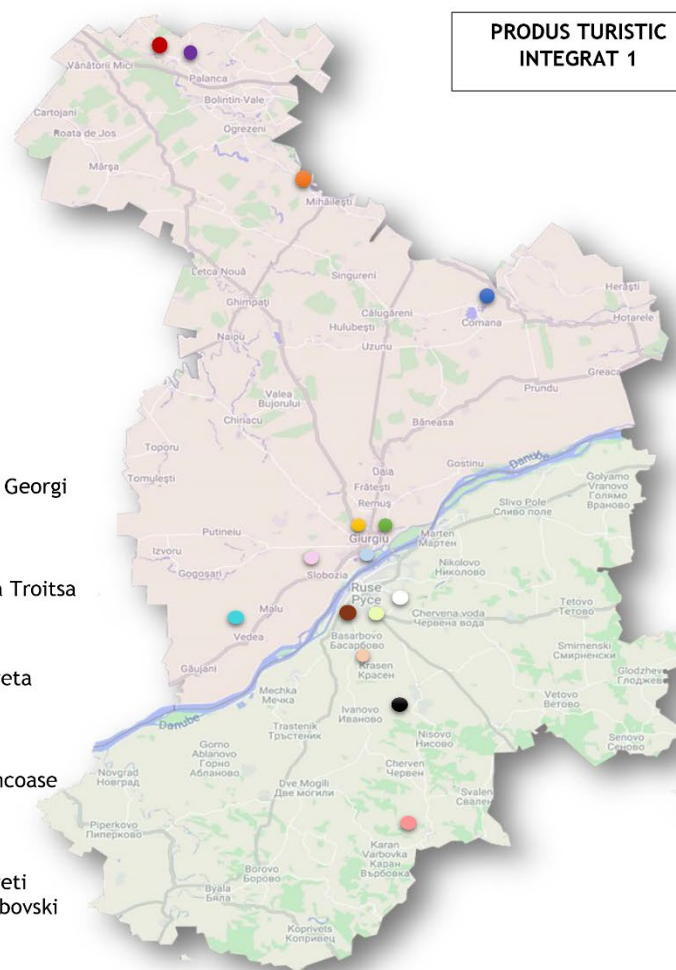
Mănăstirea Sveta Marina



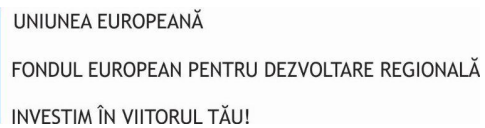
Bisericile stâncoase din Ivanovo



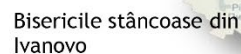
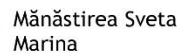
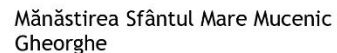
Mănăstirea Sveti Dimitar Basarbovski



PRODUS TURISTIC  
INTEGRAT 1



## ZIUA 1





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### Appendix 3 - Map of the tourist sites included in Integrated Tourist Product 1 - 1 day tourist route - "Christian cultural heritage in the spiritual space Ruse-Giurgiu"



Biserica Drugănescu



Mănăstirea Sfântul Ioan Rusul



Biserica Sfântul Pantelimon



Biserica Sf. Martiri Brâncoveni



Biserica Sveta Petka



Biserica Sveti Georgi



Biserica Sveta Troitsa





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#### Annexe 4 - Map of tourist sites included in the Integrated Tourist Product 2 - Following in the footsteps of the saints of the Romanian and Bulgarian people



Mănăstirea Sveti Dimitar  
Basarbovski



Biserica Sveti Georgi



Biserica Sveta Petka



Biserica Sfântul Pantelimon



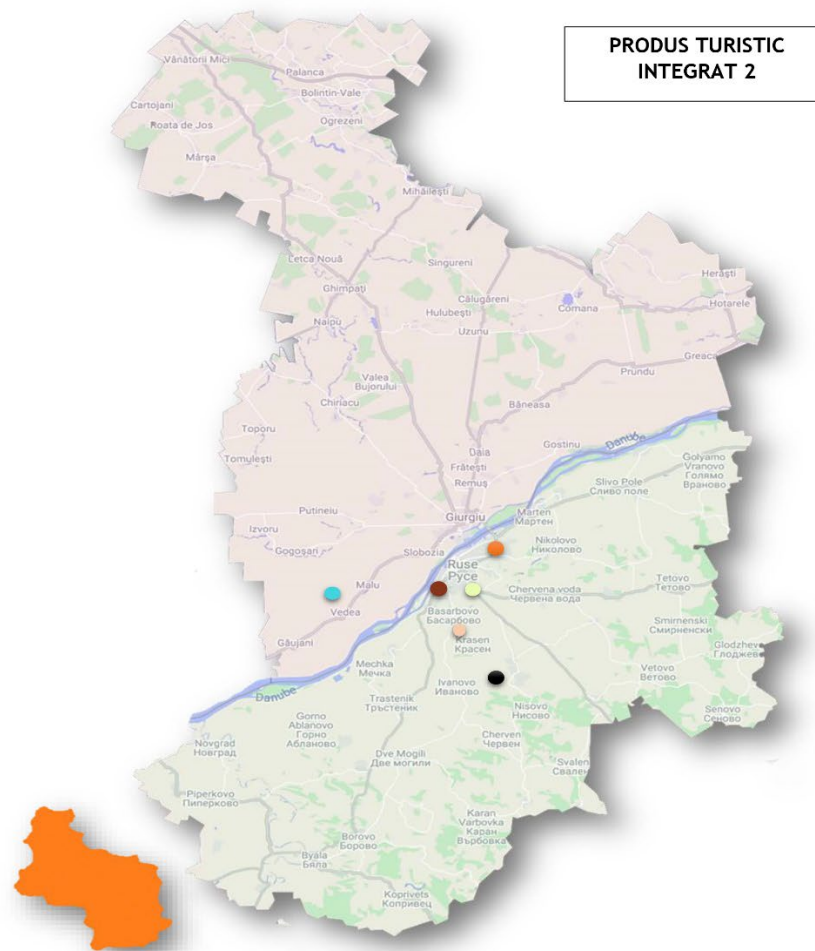
Panteonul din Ruse



Bisericile stâncoase din Ivanovo



Regiunea Veliko Tarnovo



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## Appendix 5 - Map of the tourist sites included in the Integrated Tourist Product 2 - Tour 2 days - Following in the footsteps of the saints of the Romanian people and the Bulgarian people

### ZIUA 1



Mănăstirea Sveti  
Dimitar Basarbovski



Biserica Sveti Georgi



Biserica Sveta Petka



Biserica Sf. Pantelimon,  
Vede



Biserica Sf. Martiri  
Brâncoveni



Mănăstirea Sfântul Mare  
Mucenic Gheorghe



Cetatea din Giurgiu



Panteonul din Ruse

### ZIUA 2



Bisericele stâncoase din  
Ivanovo

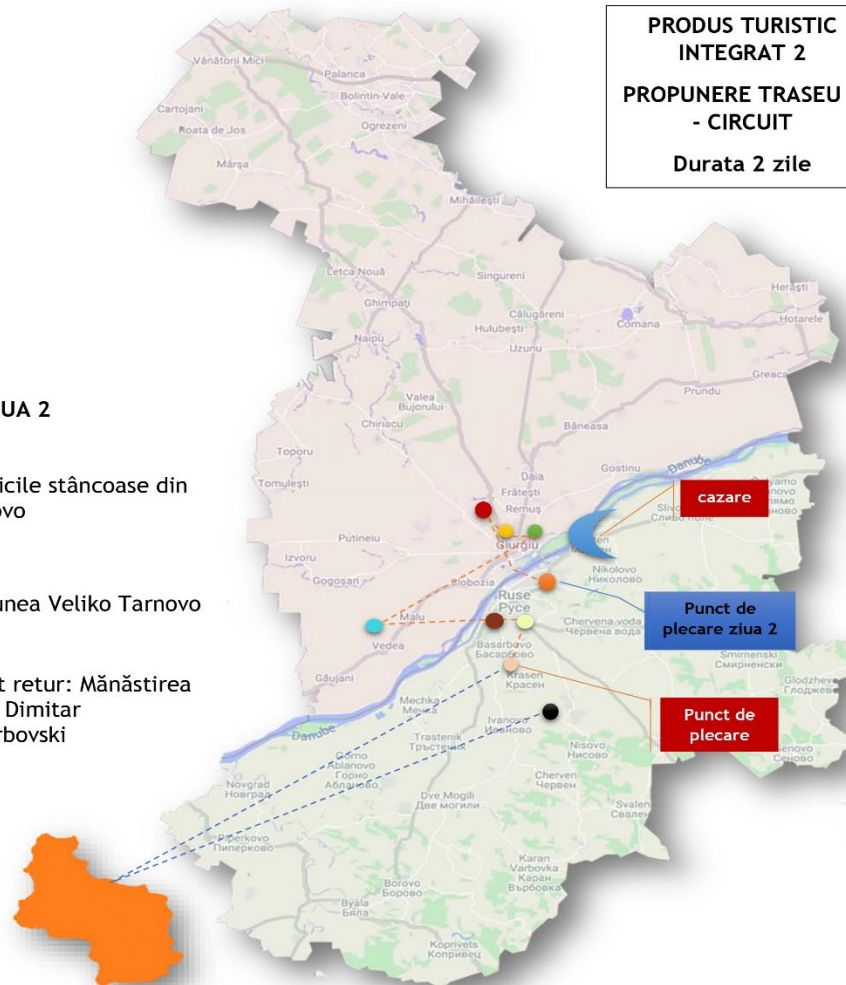


Regiunea Veliko Tarnovo



Punct retur: Mănăstirea  
Sveti Dimitar  
Basarbovski

PRODUS TURISTIC  
INTEGRAT 2  
PROPUNERE TRASEU 1  
- CIRCUIT  
Durata 2 zile



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## Appendix 7 - Map of tourist sites included in the Integrated Tourist Product 3- History and Civilization in the Ruse-Giurgiu Cultural Corridor



Orașul medieval Cherven



Bisericile stâncoase din Ivanovo



Biserica Sveti Georgi



Biserica Sveta Petka



Biserica Sveta Troitsa



Mănăstirea Comana



Mănăstirea Comana



Biserica Sf. Martiri Brâncoveni



Mănăstirea Sfântul Mare Mucenic Gheorghe



Biserica Drăgulești Buna Vestire



Mănăstirea Sfântul Ioan Rusul



Biserica Sfântul Pantelimon



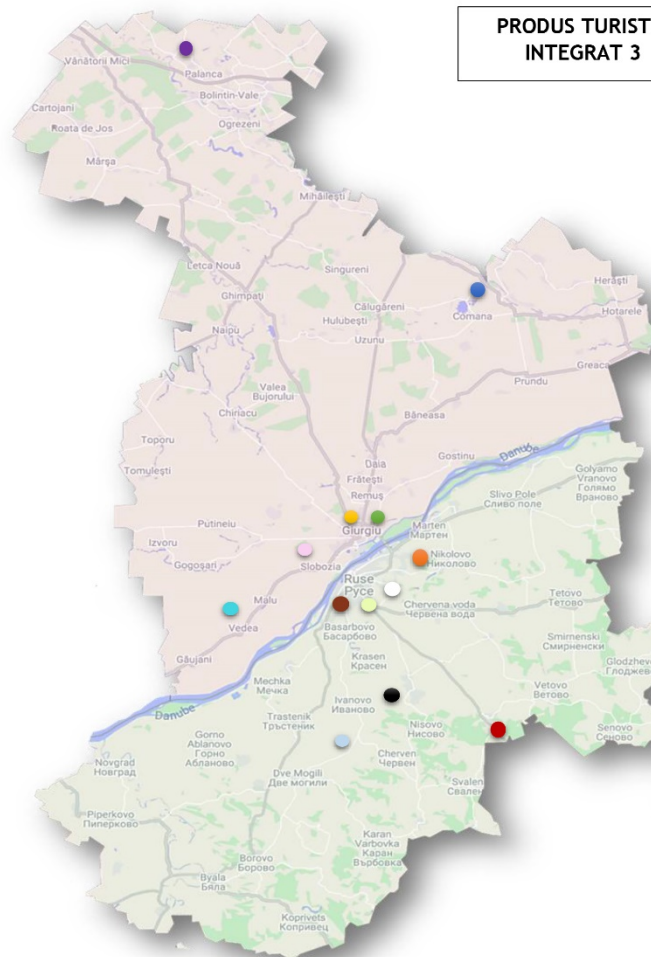
Panteonul din Ruse



Așezarea de lângă satul Pisantes



Biserica Sveta Petka



PRODUS TURISTIC INTEGRAT 3

ROMÂNIA - BULGARIA



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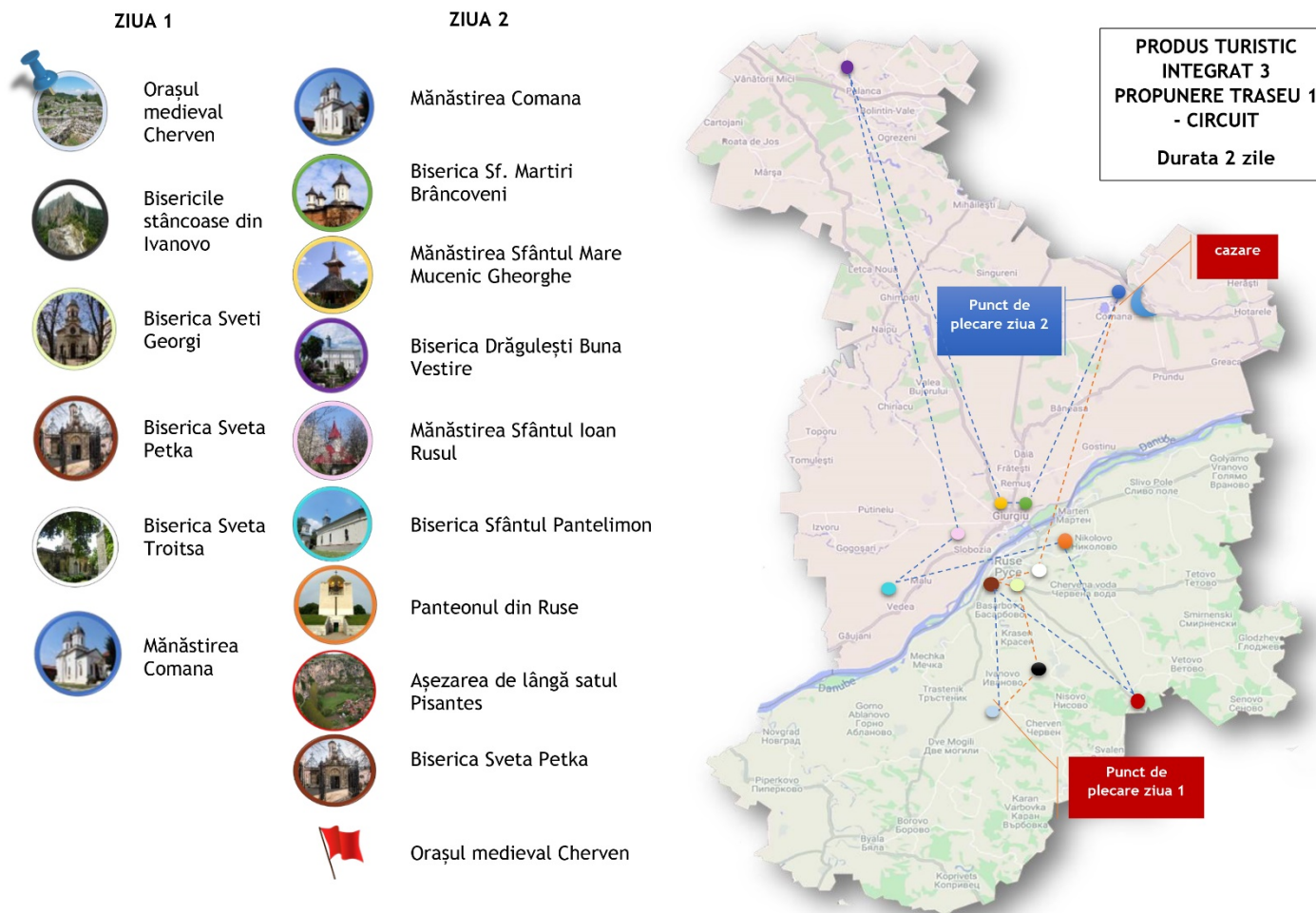
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## Appendix 8 - Map of tourist sites included in the Integrated Tourist Product 3- 2-day tour - History and civilization in the cultural corridor Ruse-Giurgiu





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## Appendix 9 - Map of tourist sites included in the Integrated Tourist Product 3- 1-day tourist route - History and civilization in the cultural corridor Ruse-Giurgiu



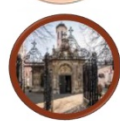
Orașul medieval Cherven



Bisericile stâncoase din Ivanovo



Mănăstirea Sveti Dimitar Basarbovski



Biserica Sveta Petka



Mănăstirea Comana



Biserica Sf. Pantelimon, Vede



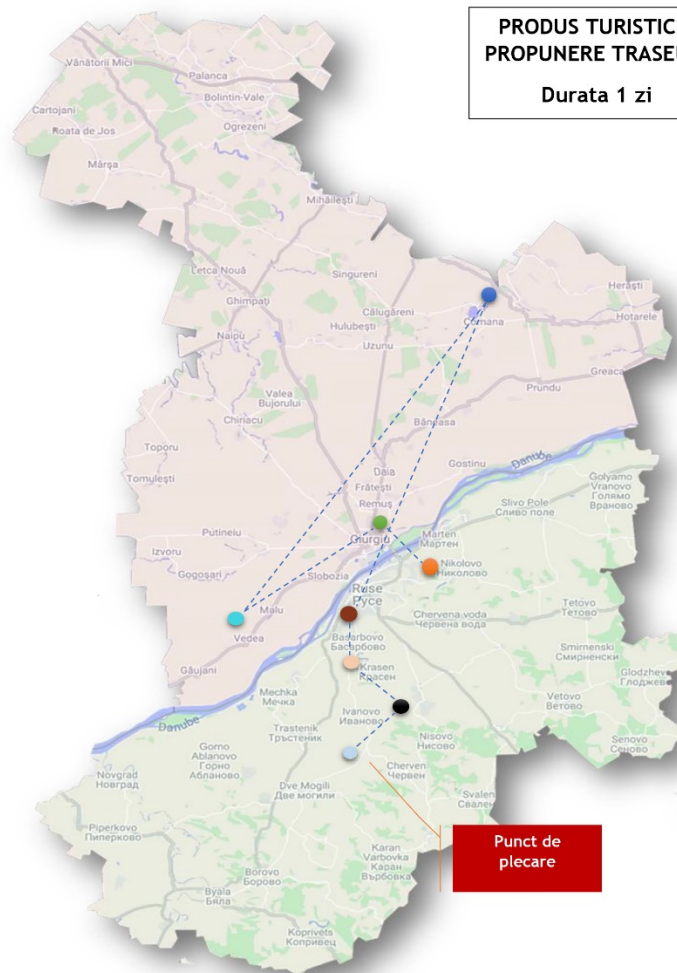
Biserica Sf. Martiri Brâncoveni



Panteonul din Ruse



Punct retur Orașul medieval Cherven



PRODUS TURISTIC 3  
PROPUNERE TRASEU 2

Durata 1 zi

Punct de  
plecare

ROMÂNIA - BULGARIA



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