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# Joint marketing strategy for popularization of the region of Plevne - Turnu Magurele as an attractive thematic tourist destination and integrated tourist products developed within the project "Memory Route: Sustainable cross-border tourism products for Grivitsa Memorial Park and Turnu Fortress



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*Project ROBG-397 „Memory route: Sustainable cross-border tourism products for Memorial park “Grivitsa” and „Turnu” Fortress*

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## 1. Information on the context of strategy development

This strategy has been developed within the Project „Memory Route - Sustainable cross-border tourism products for Memorial Park „Grivitsa” and „Turnu” Fortress”, funded by the Cross-border Cooperation Program "INTERREG V-A Romania-Bulgaria 2014 - 2020", Subsidy Contract 94696/ 21.08.18, funded by the Interreg V - A Romania-Bulgaria Program is a program funded by the European Union (European Regional Development Fund, ERDF). The aim of the program is to develop the border area between the two countries by funding joint projects.

The main goal of the project is to improve the sustainable use of the historical and cultural heritage of the project partners by identifying, developing and promoting thematic, alternative, cross-border products and services in Grivitsa Memorial Park and Turnu Fortress.

The project is a partnership between the Municipality of Plevne (Lead Partner) and the Municipality of Turnu Magurele (Partner) and provides for the development of sustainable integrated tourism products and services based on historical military cooperation and military traditions from ancient times to the present, transforming the cross-border area (the territory of Plevne Municipality and the Municipality of Turnu Magurele) into an attractive thematic tourist destination.

The public procurement was conducted in connection with the implementation of the commitments of the Municipality of Plevne to the activities described in Work Package (WP T1) of the approved application form of the project - Development of joint tourism products, services and marketing strategy. 9 unique integrated tourism products and services, equally attractive to tourists and locals, will be developed under the project, by focusing on the most



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valuable cultural and historical values of the region - military cooperation and traditions over the centuries - from Roman to modern times.

Assignor of the contract for development of the joint marketing strategy IRO-2408 dated 18.07.2019 is the Municipality of Plevne, and the contractor is Estat OOD.

Tourism, in particular cultural and historical, is a key sector in the development of the cross-border region, as stated in strategic and program documents at various levels of government. The region is rich in cultural locations and sites, and for some of them infrastructure investments have been made, including with funding from the European Union. However, this potential, despite the focused measures in recent years, has not been fully exploited, and some of the sites are unknown outside local communities. The project increases the potential for cultural tourism in the Plevne-Turnu Magurele cross-border region, filling the gap and developing and promoting joint tourism products and services for the shared cultural and historical heritage in the region. A joint and strategic approach is needed, involving all stakeholders, based on the fact that the topic is specific-military-historical and requires an innovative approach for adequate targeting and more comprehensive involvement of target groups.

The development of the Joint Marketing Strategy allows for the creation of:

- Toolkit for promotion of new tourism products and services created within the current CBC project;
- Opportunity for rapprochement and cooperation between local authorities, tourism business, cultural institutes, NGOs, etc., from the cross-border region of Plevne - Turnu Magurele;
- Time-based definition of priorities, measures and activities for sustainable positioning



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of tourist products and services related to the joint military-historical heritage and achieving a cross-border dimension of the preserved cultural and historical sites.

The marketing strategy is developed in the form of a strategic document to support the planning and implementation of further activities by project partners aimed at the development and establishment of joint cultural and historical sites and related tourism products and services.

It needs to find its place in the hierarchy of program documents of the two partner administrations, in view of its implementation and the provision of resources therefor. The implementation of the strategy can be achieved only with its recognition by stakeholders for the implementation of products and services and with the development of tourism in the cross-border region.

## 2. Structure of the Marketing Strategy

The structure of this document follows the main elements - subject of the contract for its preparation, structured in: analytical part of the current situation and definition of potential for development; strategic part, implementation plan and monitoring, as follows:

- Marketing profile of the integrated tourism product - existing potential tourist resources - internal and external - location, transport accessibility, tourist flows, conditions for tourist visits, accommodation
- Market evaluation of the planned tourist products and services under the project
- SWOT analysis - outlining the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the partners in the process of promoting the region of Plevne - Turnu Magurele as an attractive thematic tourist destination and the integrated tourism products developed within the project



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- Goals and scope of the strategy
- Target groups and target markets
- Strategy for marketing the integrated tourism product - identification of stakeholders, vision for development and marketing goals, marketing mix, activities for implementation of the strategy and expected results
- Additional services that can be provided and determination of target groups - incl. conducting events, trainings, filming, etc.
- Plan for implementation of the strategy - detailed with specific activities included, provision of resources, responsible parties, time period.
- Communication plan - communication goals, target groups, channels, products, financial resources and time frame
- Marketing action plan to promote the area and specific tourism products and services, including the necessary financial resources and potential sources of funding
- Performance monitoring system

### 3. Work approach

The starting points for the development of the Strategy are related to the consideration of the basic principles for the development and implementation of local and regional policies for tourism development. A combination of appropriate methods for creating the document is applied.

Based on the analysis of the current state of the cultural and historical heritage of the territory and the general trends in the development of tourism of the two municipalities and the defined 9 tourist products and services that will be developed and proposed for sustainable implementation after the end of the joint project, a good basis for balanced



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development of a joint tourist destination in the cross-border region in the long run is created.

The strategy is based on the tourist products and services defined in the project proposal, which will operate after the project and aims at their optimal presentation and promotion in the context of cultural heritage in the cross-border region of Pleven - Turnu Magurele.

The respective program documents at the European, national, regional, regional and municipal levels are taken into account, in accordance with the specific resource potential of the two municipalities, as well as the applicable European documents.

The main tasks and activities that have been performed in order to achieve the objectives of the project are:

- Analysis of strategic documents, focusing on those in the field of tourism and the available marketing plans with secured funding
- Identifying similar projects / products and defining common marketing approaches
- Analysis of statistical data - typology of target markets, tourist flow, segmentation of the tourist market
- Qualitative and quantitative research - focus groups, interviews and online survey
- SWOT and PESTLE analyses
- Defining a common strategic framework
- Defining target markets and users for each service / product
- Defining tools for optimal marketing performance for each product / service

Two seminars were held to discuss with partners and stakeholders the proposed ideas and the draft strategy paper.



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The proposed approach can ensure the effective functioning of the tourist destination, which provides an opportunity for a tourist, educational and physical experience through real contact with the sites, and the strategy provides for the possibility of a virtual experience as well.

The strategy is aimed at a system of sites with a clearly defined theme: the military-historical heritage in the region of Plevne-Turnu Magurele. At the same time, an approach is proposed to use the potential of the created and already existing tourist products, services and destinations in the cross-border region, including in different types of tourism and thus optimizing the effect of the joint project.

The chosen approach creates flexibility in the individual design and offering of products and services according to the capabilities and preferences of the target groups, allowing for their packaging and complementarity with other products and services in the cross-border region.

The development of this strategy is based on the following basic understandings that are relevant to the current marketing of tourism products and services:

- **Authenticity** of the products and services and respectively of the accompanying experiences - a specific topic, which defines the products and services as cultural-historical and educational tourism;
- **Attractiveness** - the accompanying services are unique for the cross-border region Plevne - Turnu Magurele, and in addition to being contemporary, they are also thematically differentiated - boot camps, team building, paintball;
- **Opportunities for varied experiences** - through participation in the festival "Memory Route", military-historical tourist fair "Military Route of Memory", fitness boot camps, military-themed teambuildings, paintball, reconstructions of historical events;



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- **Achieving increased visibility and recognizability** of the tourist destination, products and services through clear positioning and communication of the specific thematic orientation;
- **Complementarity in the tourist offerings** - through the products and services developed within the project the potential of the existing military-historical tourist sites is optimized and complementarity in the tourist offerings is realized;
- **Opportunity to integrate with other types of tourism and available products services in the cross-border region** - Many initiatives have been implemented to structure and promote tourist destinations, packages, products and services in the region, which use different potentials and have different focuses - fishing, alternatives for over 55 year-olds, ecotourism, cycling routes, wine and gourmet tours, hot air balloon trips and other. In the long run, it is possible to develop a more comprehensive tourist destination - the Danube Limes, wherein the current complex tourist project will be integrated. The preparation of the strategy takes into account the possibility of using and capitalizing the available resources in the region - natural and cultural heritage, other types of tourism, as well as enriching products and services through their independent operation or packaging / integration with other tourism products and services in the area. In this way, the circle of target visitors can be expanded by combining the interests of certain categories of visitors, as the main thematic product is supplemented with additional types of tourist services and products.
- **Focus on digital marketing** as a major modern form of marketing tourism products and services in view of the profile of target groups;
- **Compliance** with the requirements of the Personal Data Protection Act and ensuring the security of the online resources used.



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#### 4. Expected results

The expected results from the implementation of the contract are as follows:

- Preparation of a joint strategy for promotion of the defined tourist products and services within the project proposal of the partner municipalities "Memory Route: Sustainable cross-border tourism products for Grivitsa Memorial Park and Turnu Fortress", which will support active market positioning as a tourist destination in the medium and long term.
- Expert definition of guidelines for marketing the overall destination, as well as the individual defined products and services within the project.
- Action plan and monitoring mechanism to be provided by the Municipality of Plevne and the Municipality of Turnu Magurele, as well as other stakeholders with a proposal for specific activities for marketing tourism products and services.

#### 5. Goals of the Marketing Strategy

The marketing strategy defines the medium-term and long-term vision of the partner municipalities for market positioning of the 5 tourist products and 4 tourist services developed jointly within the framework of the current CBC project.

#### 6. Scope

The Strategy creates conditions for the realization of the potential for development of cultural and historical tourism in the cross-border region and its sustainable development.

The strategy is in line with the territorial scope of the project - the territories of the partner municipalities Plevne and Turnu Magurele, as well as with the defined 5 tourist products and 4 tourist services within the project, which are:



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## Defined tourist products

- 1 thematic cross-border tourist destination “Memory Route” - will incorporate all the thematic sites and objects of cultural and historical military heritage in Plevne and Turnu Magurele.
- 1 joint festival "Memory route" - the festival will be organized in memory of all those who gave their lives for the Romanian and Bulgarian independence. Its culmination will be the restoration of the Battle of Grivitsa, which has the potential to become an exclusive tourist attraction for guests and locals and will be organized annually.
- 1 trilingual tourist platform - the platform will contain an interactive map showing all the thematic sites and objects of cultural and historical military heritage in the area, accompanied by information about the events/persons they commemorate, interesting stories, legends, GPS coordinates etc.
- 1 joint Military History Touristic Fair “Military Memory route” - The fair will be organized at the end of the project and annually after the project and will aim to present and promote the created tourist products, among tour operators, hoteliers, cultural institutions, online reservations and tourist platforms / operators, as well as social media promoters.
- 1 permanent exhibition “Military history in images - Grivitsa Redoubt and Turnu Fortress” - will present a set of relevant images from a historical point of view and from the point of view of historical and military education, aimed at raising the historical self-awareness and respect of locals and visitors and contribute to creating a distinctive image of Plevne - Turnu Magurele., built upon a unique cross-border cultural and historical heritage.



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## Defined tourist services

- Organization of teambuilding events - the constructed Military Ethnographic Complex will have the necessary facilities to organize military-themed teambuilding events - a unique tourist service for the CB area.
- Organization of fitness boot camps - group physical training programs conducted by personal trainers and/or former military personnel. The boot camps will be based on the military style of training and may be historically-themed: Roman, Middle age or 19-th century, depending on the clients' preferences.
- Paintball - the paintball services will be designed to attract both tourists and local inhabitants. The Grivitsa park location is perfect for organizing recreational and competitive paintball games, including incorporating it into the teambuilding packages. The paintball instructors may be former military men/women who will teach the visitors military strategy, manoeuvres, etc. during the games. On-demand paintball tournaments will be organized.
- On-demand restoration of the historical military events with educational or entertainment purposes: the project envisages the establishment of a joint club for historical restorations of the events related to the Siege of Pleven. The club will be trained to restore the historical events and will be equipped with authentic gear, weapons, uniforms, pyro effects, etc.



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Cultural and historical sites falling within the scope of the tourist destination “Memory route”, are as follows:

### REGIONAL MUSEUM OF MILITARY HISTORY - PLEVEN

#### MUSEUMS AND EXHIBITS IN THE REGIONAL MUSEUM OF MILITARY HISTORY

##### Panorama "Pleven Epic 1877 - 1878"

Panorama "The Pleven Epic of 1877" It was built on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the battles near Pleven during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and the liberation of the city on December 10, 1877. It is located in Skobelev Park, on the battlefield, where during the III assault on Pleven / September 11-12, 1877 / the fiercest battles were fought for the conquest of the city by the Russian army. The first sod was made on January 19, 1977, and the official opening was on December 10, 1977.

Panorama Hall "Third Assault on Pleven September 11-12, 1877" presents the most critical moment in the battle of the Green Hills - around 16.30 on September 11, when Gen. M.D. Skobelev at the head of his detachment captured one of the two strongest Turkish fortifications south of Pleven - the redoubt "Kovanlak" and cut into the center of the Turkish defense. An hour later, the redoubt "Issa aga" was captured.

In Diorama Hall "Last battle for Pleven in the valley of the river Vit on 10.12.1877 the most dramatic moment of the battle on December 10 is presented, when the Turkish army attacked the blockade line in the nearest to the road to Sofia VI blockade section - at the bridge over the river. Vit, 7 km west of Pleven, but was defeated by the Russian



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	Grenadier Corps under the command of Gen. I.S. Ganetski.
<b>Chapel-Mausoleum "St. George the Victorious "</b>	Chapel-mausoleum "St. George the Victorious" was built in the period 1903-1907 in memory of the fallen Russian and Romanian soldiers in the battles around Pleven during the Russo-Turkish War 1877/1878. The chapel-mausoleum was inaugurated and consecrated on September 3, 1907, in the presence of Prince Ferdinand I, Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich - son of Emperor Alexander II, Princess Maria Pavlovna and members of the committee "Tsar Liberator Alexander II".
<b>Tsar Liberator Alexander II Museum House</b>	<p>Museum House "Tsar Liberator Alexander II" is one of the Military History House Museums established in 1907 on the initiative of the Committee "Tsar Liberator Alexander II". The exposition is arranged in the house of the Pleven merchant Ivan Vatsov, where the citizens of Pleven welcome the Russian Emperor Alexander II after the liberation of the city - December 10.</p> <p>House Museum "Tsar Liberator Alexander II" was opened on September 3, 1907 in the presence of Prince Ferdinand I, Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich, Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna, generals and officers, participants in the war, ministers, deputies, members of the committee " Tsar Liberator Alexander II ", supporters and volunteers, guests and citizens of Pleven.</p>
<b>Skobelev park - museum</b>	Cultural monument of national importance. Established in the period 1904 - 1907 on the initiative of the committee "Tsar Liberator Alexander II" chaired by Stoyan Zaimov.



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	<p>Memorial Park-Museum, located in the southwestern part of Pleven, at the place where the detachment of Gen. M.D. Skobelev and where the fiercest battles were fought during the third assault on Pleven on September 11 - 12, 1877. At the Green Hills around 6,500 people from the 13,000th detachment of Gen. M.D. Skobelev were killed.</p> <p>Skobelev Park was opened on September 3, 1907 in the presence of the Bulgarian Prince Ferdinand I, high-ranking guests from Russia, ministers, deputies, citizens and guests of the city.</p>
<p><b>Exhibit "Pleven Epic 1877 - 1878"</b></p>	<p>The exposition is dedicated to the Pleven epic of 1877 and traces the most important moments of the battles near Pleven, the place and importance of Pleven during the war. On an area of about 400 sq.m., Tthe richest exposition in Bulgaria of original materials related to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, donated by the Russian and Romanian Ministries of War to arrange the Military History Museums in 1903-1907, is presented. Exposition "Pleven Epic of 1877" was opened in 1984.</p>
<p><b>Romanian mausoleum and memorial park - Grivitsa village</b></p>	<p>The mausoleum was built between 1892 and 1897 in memory of the fallen Romanian soldiers, with funds from the Romanian people. It was opened in 1902. A memorial park with an area of 360 decares was built around the Mausoleum in 1958. In 1967 a museum exhibit was opened, which reflects the battles near the village of Grivitsa during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and the battle route of the Romanian army. The exposition in the museum corner</p>



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	<p>presents the participation of Romania in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and the fighting near the village of Grivitsa during the Third Assault on Pleven on September 11-12, 1877.</p>
<p><b>Museum "Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich" - Pordim</b></p>	<p>Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich House Museum is one of the Military History House Museums established in 1907 on the initiative of the Tsar Alexander II Liberation Committee, opened in 1907. The exposition reflects the activity of the Headquarters of the Russian Army during the stay of the Commander-in-Chief Nikolai Nikolaevich and Emperor Alexander II in Pordim from October 26 to December 15, 1877. The exposition is arranged in the house of Ivan Stoykov-Troyanchanina, built during the period 1862-1865.</p>
<p><b>His Royal Highness Carol I Museum House - Pordim</b></p>	<p>His Royal Highness Carol I House Museum is one of the Military History House Museums established in 1907 on the initiative of the Tsar Alexander II Liberation Committee, opened in 1907. The museum exposition presents Romania's participation in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and the activities of the Headquarters of the Romanian Army during the stay of the Romanian Prince Carol I in Pordim in 1877. The exposition is arranged in the house of Varban Iliev, which is located next to the Headquarters of the Romanian Army and Prince Carol I during the battles for Pleven.</p>
<p><b>The old bridge over the river Vit near Pleven</b></p>	<p>The old bridge over the river Vit is an important part of the history of the city. The end of the five-month Pleven epic of 1877 was decided in the valley of the river Vit around the bridge of Usta Gencho.</p>



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The last battle for Plevne was in the valley of the Vit River on December 10, 1877, when the Turkish army attacked the blockade line in the VI blockade section, nearest to the road to Sofia - at the bridge over the Vit River, 7 km west of Plevne, but was defeated by the Russian Grenadier Corps under the command of Gen. I.S. Ganetski. The commander of the Turkish army at Plevne, Osman Pasha, surrendered with all his elite army and weapons.

The bridge over the Vit River has been declared a cultural monument of national importance in issue 93 of the State Gazette of 1969.

On the hill above the bridge is the Victory Monument - one of 11 monuments of the same type, built in the first years after the liberation at the initiative of the Russian Ministry of War with the personal order of Emperor Alexander II. They mark the sites of the greatest battles and the most significant victories of the Russian army during the Russo-Turkish War. The monuments were designed by arch. Vocar and were built in the period 1878-1881.

It is noted on the monument that it was erected in honor of the three attacks on Plevne, the battles of Gorni Dabnik and Telish, the last battle for the city and the capitulation of Osman Pasha.



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## REGIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM - PLEVEN

RHM - Pleven is located in an impressive two-storey building with artistic, architectural and historical value - a cultural monument of national importance, built in 1884-1888 on an Italian project for a barracks.

The total fund of the museum includes over 260 thousand museum units, which with their high artistic and historical value are extremely valuable evidence of the Bulgarian history, culture and past of the city of Pleven and the region.

In 24 halls, on two floors, with a total area of 9000 m2 are shown about 7500 pieces, through which the history and culture of Pleven and the region from the deepest antiquity to the present is revealed. The main sections are:

Exposition of the Department of Archeology, which shows the historical development of the Pleven region for the period from 50 to 45 thousand years BC. until the end of the 14th century AD.

An exposition of the Ethnography Department presents the material and spiritual culture of Pleven and the settlements of the Pleven region from the lower reaches of the rivers Iskar, Vit and Osam.

Exposition of the Department of History of Bulgaria XV-XIX centuries presents both the specifics of the Pleven Revival history and the indivisibility of the development of national processes during the first centuries of Ottoman rule and the era of the Bulgarian Revival.

The exposition of the New and Recent History Department



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	<p>presents the historical and cultural development of the city of Pleven immediately after the Liberation of Bulgaria from Ottoman rule to the present day and the participation of the IV Pleven Infantry Regiment in the Serbo-Bulgarian War of 1885 and the IX Pleven Infantry division in the wars of national unification and World War II.</p> <p>Gena Dimitrova Exposition is an impression of the life and remarkable career of the great opera singer. A lapidarium with architectural details and tombstones from the Roman city of Ulpia Escus and the fortress of Storgozia was built in the yard of the museum on an area of 29,000 m2.</p>
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<p><b>Ruins of the medieval fortress of Turnu</b></p>	<p>The ruins of the medieval fortress "Turnu" / Turis / of Turnu Magurele (the fortress of Mircea cel Batran from the end of the XIV century) are located south of the city, in the valley of the Danube-at a distance of 4 km from the city and 1 km from the mouth of the river Olt. The fortress played an important role in the country's defense system, especially during the reign of Mircea cel Batran, who fought against the Ottoman invaders. The fortress is part of a fortified chain, along with those in Giurgiu, Turtucaia and Brail, which runs along the river.</p>
<p><b>Monument "Todorika Dorobantu" - c. Turnu Magurele</b></p>	<p>The statue of Todorica Dorobantu, located in the city park, honors the heroism of a local hero who fell in the War of Independence from 1877-1878. The statue was made in</p>



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	1907 by Italian sculptor Rafaelo Romanelli and borders two Turkish cannons captured by Romanian soldiers in Plevna.
<b>Independence monument - Turnu Magurele</b>	The monumental ensemble, dedicated to Romanian heroes in the War of Independence in 1877, was built in 1985 by a group of architects from Bucharest. The figures of 3 soldiers in a semicircle represent the three armies: infantry, sailors and border guards. The sides of the monument contain bronze bas-reliefs and represent the crossing of the Danube by the Romanian army, the attack on Plevna, as well as scenes in which the military doctor, General Carol Devila, cares for wounded heroes.
<b>St. Vineri church - Turnu Magurele</b>	Church of St. Vineri was built in 1861-1864 in the architectural style of Munte, with two bell towers and a wooden altar partition. The ensemble includes a church, a bell tower and a parish building.
<b>East Orthodox Cathedral "St. Haralambi" - Turnu Magurele</b>	The Eastern Orthodox Cathedral of St. Haralambi, located in the center of Turnu Magurele, was built / 1900-1902 / on the site of the old church, which was built between 1842-1845. Today's church was built on the initiative of King Carol I and Queen Elizabeth. The plans were made by the French architect Andre Lecomte de Nui with architectural elements from the monastery church "Curtea de Arges". The roof is covered with copper, the furniture is made of solid oak, the colored mosaic glass is made in the country, the frescoes are on fine plaster, made by Italian artists: Romeo Girolamo and Giuseppe Vespa. The church was



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	consecrated in 1905 by Joseph Georgian. The eminent historian Nicolae Jorga placed the church third in importance and beauty after "Curtea de Agres" and "Trei lerarhi din lasi".
<b>Angelescu house - Turnu Magurele</b>	Elena Angelescu's house in Turnu Magurele is one of the most representative in the Teleorman district, built in the 19th century. It is located in the centre of the town. With the richness of its architectural elements, it is one of the most beautiful buildings in the region.
<b>Statue of Mircea cel Batran - Turnu Magurele</b>	<b>Mircea cel Batran is the man who rebuilt and fortified the Turnu Fortress as a defensive structure against the Ottoman invasion. It is located in a small park on Independence Boulevard. The statue of Mircea cel Batran was painted by Bucharest sculptor Oscar Hahn in 1968.</b>
<b>The river Sai bridge</b>	<b>It was built in 1917 over the Sai River and is known as the Iron Bridge. It was built by the Germans to cross the Danube with military vehicles and troops on the way to Greece and Italy.</b>
<b>Water tower - Turnu Magurele</b>	The water tower in Turnu Magurele was built in 1915 in order to supply the city with water. Today it is a historical monument.
<b>The bust of General David Praporgescu</b>	The bust of General David Praporgescu was erected in honor of the general, born to a local peasant family in Turnu Magurele. On September 30, 1916, he was killed at the front during the First World War in the battles of Olt in the ridges of the Carpathians. The bust was made by the sculptor Gheorghe Iliescu-Culinesti.



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At the same time, in order to achieve an integrated effect and added value in marketing the tourist destination Memory Route, this strategy takes into account existing tourism projects / initiatives in both municipalities, in the Danube cross-border region as a whole and existing regional tourism products with their possible marketing approaches.

7. Marketing profile of the integrated tourism product - existing potential tourist resources - internal and external - location, transport accessibility, tourist flows, conditions for tourist visits, accommodation

Linking the strategy with European, national strategic and program documents, with plans and programs at the regional and municipal levels

The development of the Joint Marketing Strategy for Preservation and Promotion of Cultural Heritage takes into account trends in the development of partner municipalities, as well as planned interventions in current and future strategic documents related to sustainable development of tourism and cultural heritage protection and its promotion. The main highlights of these strategic documents concerning tourism, as well as in particular cultural and historical tourism and accompanying activities for infrastructure development and capacity building for its promotion, marketing and market positioning are set out in the following documents:

The National Strategy for Regional Development (NSRD) of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2012-2022

The National Strategy for Regional Development is a strategic document that sets the model of state policy for achieving balanced and sustainable development of the country's regions.



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The NSRD sets the long-term goals and priorities of the regional development policy and monitors their achievement and complementarity. The main strategic goal of the NSRD is "Achieving sustainable integrated regional development based on the use of local potential and bringing regions closer in economic, social and territorial terms." At the regional level, it should contribute to the realization of some of the strategic goals set in the NSRD 2012-2022, some of which are: "Balanced territorial development by strengthening the network of cities-centres, improving interconnection in the regions and the quality of the environment in settlements" and "Social cohesion and reducing regional disparities in the social sphere through the development and realization of human capital."

### [Updated national strategy for sustainable development of tourism in the Republic of Bulgaria, 2014-2030](#)

The National Strategy for sustainable development of tourism is a strategic document that sets the model of state policy for achieving balanced and sustainable development of tourism in the country and has 4 strategic objectives: creating a favourable business environment for the development of sustainable tourism; development of a competitive tourism sector; successful positioning of Bulgaria on the world tourist market; balanced development of tourist areas.

Strategic objective, Sub-objective 4 Improving distribution implies the following measures with specific relevance to this document:

1. Encouraging the use of modern methods and technologies for distribution
2. Encouraging partnerships to increase the efficiency of distribution at the national and international levels

Strategic objective 3, Sub-objective 4 Improving the promotion of the destination



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1. Improve the online presentation of the destination and tourist areas
2. Improving the presentation of the destination at the entrances of the country
3. Improving the presentation of the destination at international tourism exhibitions and fairs
4. Implementation of national and international advertising and information campaigns, according to the national marketing strategy of the destination and the strategies of the tourist regions
5. Synchronization of communication and advertising activities of all stakeholders

Strategic objective 4, section 1 Creating conditions for sustainable development of tourist areas

1. Improving strategic planning for the development of tourist areas
2. Providing marketing support to organizations for the management of a tourist area
3. Support for securing sustainable funding of organizations for the management of a tourist area
4. Promotion of tourist areas on a national and international level

Strategic objective 4, section 2 development of tourist areas

1. Development of the Danube region as a destination with its own brand for cultural and cruise tourism based on the rich cultural and historical heritage and various urban events and opportunities for experiences along the Danube

[Strategy for development of Bulgarian culture 2019-2029 / Bulgaria /](#)

The Strategy for the Development of Culture in the period 2019-2029 sets out the vision for the development of a common strategic strategy document, which based on the analysis of



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the environment would set out the main priorities, strategic objectives and activities to be worked on in upcoming period of 10 years.

The Strategy is based on the understanding that the national culture is a set of separate areas / elements, therefore, on the basis of the general strategic framework and established vision, specific strategic documents / strategies / may be developed with comprehensive in-depth analysis and vision for each sector separately, which outline in detail the specific activities, individual steps and ways to implement the common vision for the development of culture for the period 2019-2029. This is justified by the specifics of each area, which is developing both by itself and as a common whole.

#### [National Tourism Master Plan of Romania 2007-2026](#)

The document defines a sustainable approach to the development of the tourism sector in the country in order to optimally contribute to the state of the national economy. In the strategic document the Danube Delta is defined as a specific tourist area with a focus on natural and eco tourism, cruise tourism. The strategy states that the group of young professionals, as well as young people, has a preference for cultural and ecotourism, as well as for the Danube Delta region. The strengths of the tourism sector in the country are the biodiversity of the Danube Delta - a site of global importance under the protection of UNESCO, the presence of cultural and historical sites, significant investment of private business in accommodation, active network of tour operators, interest by foreign investors in the development of the sector.

#### [The Strategy for Culture and National Heritage 2016-2022 / Romania /](#)

The Strategy for Culture and National Heritage 2016-2022 is a document that is the result of intensive work based on the consultations and participation of the Platform for Living Culture



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and the employees of the Ministry and the support of the National Institute for Cultural Research and Training. The model of cultural planning thus proposed is in line with European trends in the development of public policies at the national level, which direct culture in support of social benefits and fundamental rights. At the same time, most current statistics at the national level have been updated to include major projects determining the development of the cultural sector by 2022.

The Strategy for Culture and National Heritage 2016-2022 is a medium-term public policy document that sets the Romanian government's policy in this area, outlining the horizon of public action for balanced, sustainable and intelligent, cultural development directly benefiting of all participants in cultural activities and society as a whole.

The Strategy for Culture and National Heritage 2016-2022 is the national document for cultural planning, based on the strategic documents at regional, district and local level and the operational documentation for programs and projects with public funds as well as other strategies for development at national level of cultural significance and impact.

#### [Regional Development Plan of the South Muntenia Region for the period 2014-2020.](#)

The Southern Muntenia Regional Development Plan is a medium-term planning document setting out objectives and priorities for sustainable growth at regional level with the following vision: Stimulating a process of sustainable and balanced economic growth in the region of Southern Muntenia, based on innovation and conducive to social inclusion, leading to increased prosperity and quality of life of its inhabitants and Specific strategic objective: restoring the attractiveness and accessibility of the South Muntenia region by developing the mobility and connectivity of the population, goods and related services in order to promote sustainable development.



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## Regional Development Strategy for Pleven Region for the period 2014-2020.

The Regional development strategy defines the framework for development and organization of the district and is a strategic document that corresponds to the Regional Development Plan and municipal development plans. This close relationship between the different levels of planning and management in the country is an indicator of synchronicity and complementarity in setting strategic objectives in view of regional development. The Regional Development Strategy for Pleven Region has the following vision: Pleven Region - economic and agricultural center of the Danube region, functionally and territorially integrated with neighboring regions, socially inclusive and stable, with developed infrastructure and good transport accessibility, with protection of natural and cultural heritage and Strategic objective 4 Preservation of natural and cultural heritage for future generations.

## Municipal Development Plan (MDP) of the Municipality of Pleven for the period 2014-2020

The Municipal Development Plan for the period 2014-2020 is a document with strategic planning and a program for sustainable local development, which is developed in accordance with the provisions of the Regional Development Strategy of Pleven for the period 2014-2020 and other strategic documents. As a document, it affects the lowest level of the system for strategic planning and management of regional development and links the comparative advantages and potential for development at the local level with a clearly defined vision, goals and priorities for municipal development in line with the provisions of the documents setting the regional policy directions at the European, national and regional levels. The vision is defined as follows: The Municipality of Pleven will develop as a sustainable self-governing community with a diverse and modernly structured knowledge-based economy, using local human resources and effectively absorbing the available comparative advantages on the territory, while creating better living and business condition for the local community.



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Towards the horizon of MDP, the Municipality of Pleven is a leader and main support center in the development of the Northwest region, with a modern economy, generating products with increasing added value, developed and profitable tourism, modern infrastructure and quality living environment. Within the strategic objective 1 Acceleration of the socio-economic development of the municipality is defined Priority 1.5 Development of profitable and diverse tourism.

### Teleorman County Sustainable Development Strategy 2014-2020

The strategic document states that one of the essential elements that derive from the overall image of Teleorman County, which is important for the formation of the district's development potential, can be summarized as the development of tourism.

The main objectives for tourism in Teleorman County are concentrated in the areas of influence of the main urban agglomerations in the county: Alexandria, Turnu Magurele and Zimnica.

Teleorman County has a diverse natural environment conducive to the development of fishing and hunting tourism.

The tourist destination with the highest tourist potential is the medieval fortress of Turnu Magurele, built on the ruins of the Roman fortress of Turis.

The tourist potential of the municipality of Turnu Magurele is defined as cultural and historical and the municipality is named as the main historical center of the district because of the ruins of the medieval fortress of Turnu, built on the ruins of the Roman fortress "Turis".



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The strategy states that the municipality of Turnu Magurele has real potential for development in terms of tourism, which must be developed.

At the same time, it is stated that this potential is not used optimally and a structured effort is needed in this direction.

### Strategic documents at the European level

The development of the Joint Marketing Strategy of the Municipality of Plevne and the Municipality of Turnu Magurele is in line with the specific requirements of the founding strategic documents for the whole EU, as well as normative documents concerning Community and national legislation in regional development, sectoral policies and spatial planning.

#### The Europe 2020 Strategy / 2010 /

The strategy sets the framework for the interventions needed to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in EU countries and regions.

#### European Union Strategy for the Danube Region

The Strategy is divided into 11 priority areas, supporting the four main pillars of the Strategy: A) Connecting the Danube region: 1) Improving mobility and intermodality; 2) Promoting more sustainable energy; 3) Promoting culture, tourism and people-to-people contacts; B) Environmental protection in the Danube region: 1) Restoration and maintenance of water quality; 2) Environmental risk management; 3) Conservation of biodiversity, landscapes and air and soil quality; B) Creating prosperity in the Danube region: 1) Development of a society based on the foundations of knowledge through research, education and information technology; 2) Supporting the competitiveness of enterprises; 3) Investing in people and



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skills; D) Strengthening the Danube region: 1) Increasing institutional capacity and cooperation; 2) Cooperation to ensure security and tackle organized crime.

Priority area 3: Promoting culture, tourism and people-to-people contact

The Danube region is attractive with its common history and traditions, culture and arts, reflecting the different communities in the region, as well as with its remarkable natural heritage. The Danube Delta is a World Heritage Site and offers opportunities for sports and other entertainment. By applying a common and sustainable approach to improving and promoting these opportunities, the Danube region should become a European and global "brand".

Coordination of each priority area is a task for Member States (together with non-EU countries or regions, with the exception of issues decided by the EU at the national level, such as security, serious crime and organized crime), in consultation with the Commission, as well as with relevant EU agencies and regional organizations.

The coordinators of the priority areas must demonstrate commitment to the whole Danube region, have expertise, ensure implementation (e.g. by agreeing on planning by setting objectives, indicators and timetables, and by providing broad contacts between organizers of project, programs and financial resources, providing technical assistance and advice).

The countries of Bulgaria and Romania have been designated as Coordinators of Priority Area 3, and the European Commission is assisted by national contact points, in Bulgaria the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works. In turn, the Ministry of Tourism is a leading institution in the coordination of the Strategy in partnership with Romania, while initiating activities and projects for its implementation at national and transnational level.



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## Joint document for spatial development of the Visegrad Four countries, Bulgaria and Romania

The joint document on spatial development of the V4 + 2 countries is the result of cooperation in the field of territorial development between six countries - Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Its aim is to achieve coordination of territorial development and concrete solutions to the interruptions of the so-called poles and axes of development and the achievement of interconnected transport networks.

## Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural Heritage and Natural Heritage

According to the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, its seventeenth session, held in Paris from 17 October to 21 November 1972, the world's cultural and natural heritage is increasingly threatened by destruction, which is due not only to the traditional causes of degradation, but also to the very development of socio-economic life, as a result of which the damaging and destructive phenomena are deepening.

It is noted that the destruction or disappearance of a cultural and natural heritage is a disastrous loss for all mankind and that the preservation of this heritage at national level is unsatisfactory due to the extensive resources it needs and the insufficient economic, scientific and technical resources of the country on whose territory the respective heritage is located which is subject to preservation.

The UNESCO Statute is recalled, which provides for the assistance of the Organization for the Preservation, Development and Dissemination of Knowledge, for the Promotion of World Heritage Preservation and Protection, and for the establishment of international conventions in this field to be recommended to interested peoples.



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Taking into account the existing international conventions, recommendations and resolutions in the field of cultural and natural heritage affirm the importance of the work for the protection of this unique and irreplaceable heritage for all mankind, regardless of the nation to which it belongs.

It is taken into account that individual sites of cultural and natural heritage are of exceptional interest and need to be preserved as an element of the world heritage of all mankind.

### [International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites / Venice Charter, Venice, 1964](#)

Carriers of spiritual messages from the past, cultural monuments of nations are living testimonies of their centuries-old traditions. Mankind, which with each passing day realizes the unity of human values as a common heritage, assumes the responsibility to future generations for its preservation and the obligation to pass on these values to them in all the richness of their authenticity. That is why it is necessary to define and formulate jointly on an international scale the guiding principles of conservation and restoration of cultural monuments, which each country can apply depending on its culture and traditions.

By formulating these basic principles for the first time, the Athens Charter of 1931 helped to develop a broad international movement, which was reflected in some national documents, in the work of ICOM and UNESCO, and in the establishment by UNESCO of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property. However, the critical spirit and sensitivity to the increasingly complex and diverse problems necessitated a revision of the Charter's principles so that they could be deepened and expanded in a new



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document. In this connection, the Second International Congress of Architects and Specialists in the Field of Cultural Monuments, held in Venice from 25 to 31 May 1964.

### Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, hereinafter referred to as "UNESCO", held in Paris from 29 September to 17 October 2003, at its 32nd session referred to existing international human rights law, in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966.

The importance of the intangible cultural heritage, as an expression of cultural diversity and the guarantee of sustainable development is taken into account in the UNESCO Recommendation on the Preservation of Folklore of 1989, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of 2001 and the The Istanbul Declaration of 2002, adopted at the Third Round Table of Ministers of Culture.

The close interdependence between the intangible cultural heritage and the tangible cultural and natural heritage is taken into account.

It is recognized that the processes of globalization and social change create conditions for the resumption of dialogue between societies, in parallel with the manifestations of intolerance which are a source of serious threat of degradation, extinction and destruction of intangible cultural heritage due to lack of funds for its preservation.

Awareness is raised of the common concern and aspiration to preserve the intangible cultural heritage of mankind.

It is recognized that society, and in particular indigenous communities and groups, and in some cases individuals, play an important role in the process of creating, preserving and



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recreating the intangible cultural heritage, thus contributing to the enrichment of cultural diversity and encourage human creativity.

The great importance of UNESCO's work for the development of normative acts for the protection of cultural heritage, and in particular the 1972 Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, is noted.

It is also noted that there are currently no multilateral binding treaties in the field of intangible cultural heritage.

It is recognized that the current international agreements, recommendations and resolutions in the field of cultural and natural heritage need to be enriched and effectively supplemented with new provisions relating to the intangible cultural heritage.

The need for a deeper awareness, especially of the younger generation, of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage and its preservation is recognized.

It is recognized that the international community and the Party states to this Convention should contribute to the preservation of this heritage in a spirit of cooperation and mutual assistance.

The UNESCO programs in the field of the intangible cultural heritage, and in particular the program to proclaim the masterpieces of the oral and intangible heritage of mankind are recalled.

The invaluable role of the intangible cultural heritage as a factor for cohesion, cultural exchange and mutual understanding between people is taken into account.

The objectives of this Convention are:

- Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
- Recognition for the intangible cultural heritage of the respective communities, groups and individuals;



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- Understanding- at local, national and international levels, the importance of the intangible cultural heritage and the importance of its mutual recognition;
- International cooperation and international assistance.

### UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Cultural diversity is an inherent quality of humanity. Cultural diversity is a common heritage of humanity and that it must be respected and preserved for the benefit of all. Cultural diversity creates a rich and diverse world that expands the range of choices, nurtures human potential and values and is a key driver for the sustainable development of communities, peoples and nations.

Cultural diversity, which thrives in conditions of democracy, tolerance, social justice and mutual respect between peoples and cultures, is essential for peace and security on a local, national and international scale.

The need to integrate culture as a strategic element in national and international development policies and in international cooperation for development is affirmed; in the light of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000), which emphasizes the need to eradicate poverty.

The objectives of the Convention are:

- Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;
- creating conditions for prosperity and free interaction of different cultures in order to enrich each other;
- promoting intercultural dialogue in order to ensure a more intensive and balanced international cultural exchange in the interests of mutual respect for cultures and the establishment of a culture of peace;



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- promoting intercultural dialogue in order to develop cultural interaction in favor of building bridges between nations;
- promoting respect for and diversity of cultural expressions at local, national and international levels;
- reaffirming the importance of the link between culture and development for all developing countries; encouraging action at national and international levels to recognize the true value of this link;
- recognition of the specific nature of cultural activities, products and services as bearers of identity, values and meaning;
- affirming the sovereign right of States to preserve, adopt and implement such policies and measures as they deem necessary to preserve and promote the diversity of cultural expressions in their territory;
- strengthening international cooperation and solidarity in a spirit of partnership in order to empower developing countries to preserve and promote the diversity of forms of cultural expression.

### *Situational analysis*

*Existing potential tourist resources - internal and external - location, transport accessibility, tourist flows, conditions for tourist visits, accommodation*

### *Accessibility and transport connections*

With an area of about 4,762.61 km<sup>2</sup> and more than 273 thousand inhabitants, the region Plevne - Turnu Magurele is located in the cross-border region Romania - Bulgaria. It consists of 11 Bulgarian municipalities and one Romanian municipality.



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Having a developed transport system is crucial for the development of tourism. That is why the transport accessibility to the sites included in the destination Memory Route is decisive for the overall positioning of the product on the tourist market.

The Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region is accessible thanks to the navigable Danube River, part of the 7th Pan-European Transport Corridor, which connects the port of Constanta with the industrial centres of Western Europe and the port of Rotterdam via the Black Sea Canal. In turn, it is crossed by two TEN-T corridors connecting Central and Northern Europe with the southeastern part of the continent and the Middle East.

In the cross-border region Romania - Bulgaria the roads of the national road network are insufficiently developed. There is no highway and high-speed roads with 4 lanes.

In general, the condition of some of the assets of the transport network is unsatisfactory, which has a negative impact on the allowable maximum speeds, travel times, comfort and operating costs.

The Pleven-Turnu Magurele region is relatively close to major tourist destinations in both countries - Bucharest and Veliko Tarnovo, and is easily accessible by land transport (car, bus and rail transport, etc.). There is no direct air access to the region, with the nearest international airports located in Bucharest and Sofia, 151 and 163 km away, respectively.

The river port of national importance Nikopol-Turnu Magurele has sufficient capacity to serve passengers. Connections of the port with the national road and railway network for public transport of national importance are established, and the European system of inland waterway canals is accessible through the Danube River.

River tourist traffic is carried out along the Danube, mainly through cruise ships. More than 11



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cruise companies organize trips on the Danube, some of which include the region in their programs.

### Location of the tourist region and sites in terms of tourist flows

The tourist destination Plevne-Turnu Magurele is located in underdeveloped regions of Bulgaria and Romania, and despite the cultural and historical value of the main site in the route - Plevne Epic, the cross-border region is not characterized by recognizability as a tourist destination. The route is away from most established tourist routes or traditional tourist centres. Rather, Plevne functions as an accompanying destination to the traditional cultural and historical tourist centre of Veliko Tarnovo or is part of educational and family weekend destinations for visitors at the national level. For its part, the municipality of Turnu Magurele is unrecognizable as a tourist destination even for the internal tourist market of Romania.

This feature allows for the development of the tourist destination Memory Route in two main directions:

- As a major tourist destination, mainly for visitors from domestic markets;
- As an accompanying tourist destination to major destinations in the cross-border region through the formation of common packages and programs.

The Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region has seen an increase in visitors over the last eight years. The number of people staying overnight increased by almost 76%, with an average annual growth of 9%, and overnight stays increased by 72%.

The main tourist flows are concentrated in the established tourist destinations Constanta (Romania) and Veliko Tarnovo and Ruse (Bulgaria).



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The number of tourists in accommodation establishments in the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region has registered a moderate increase in recent years, for which statistics are available - until 2018. The growth is mainly due to the increase in tourist visits in the county of Constanta, which forms over 80% of the total number of tourists arriving in the region. Significant increases were also registered in the districts of Dolj, Olt and Mehedinți. The only district to register a decrease in the number of arriving tourists is Teleorman.

Similar to the number of tourists arriving in the Danube cross-border region Bulgaria-Romania, the number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments registered in 2018 is higher than that registered in the previous period.

As with the number of arrivals, the increase in the number of overnight stays is mainly due to the increase in the county of Constanta, which represents over 80% of the total number of overnight stays in the region. A positive development, albeit more modest in absolute terms, was registered in the districts of Dolj, Olt and Mehedinți. On the other hand, the counties of Calarasi, Giurgiu and Teleorman are seeing a negative development.

In the Bulgarian part of the common Danube cross-border region, the largest tourist flow for 2018 is concentrated in Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse and Vratsa, both from Bulgarian tourists and foreigners. The longest stay is in Vratsa district (2.5 nights per tourist), which is one point above the average for Bulgaria (1.9).

Next are Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse and Montana. The average stay of tourists in Vidin is the shortest. Foreign tourists have the longest stays in Vratsa and Plevne, indicators that are higher than the average for Bulgaria (2,3).

In this situation of continuous growth, the Plevne-Turnu Magurele region lags far behind. For



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eight consecutive years, the market share of the region has been declining significantly. Despite the growth in number of tourist staying overnight and overnight stays (+ 8% and + 12%, respectively), growth remains well below the average for the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region.

Nearly 49,346 thousand persons staying overnight were reported in 2018 in the cross-border region of Plevne - Turnu Magurele. This is an increase of 7.6% compared to 2010 or 0.95% on average per year. The main tourist flows are concentrated in Plevne, whose share is between 85-87% of all visitors in the region.

The strongest performance of the region was in 2013 (+ 13.5%). In the period 2015-2017 there is a stabilization of persons staying overnight in a narrow range between 47 thousand - 48 thousand. Only in the last year - 2018 there is an increase of 3.2% compared to the previous year, but the result is about 2.5 thousand people below the record 2013.<sup>1</sup>

The number of local tourists in the region has been steadily declining since 2013. Their share in 2018 reached 82.7% of the total number of overnight stays of local citizens. This is a decrease of over 5% for the last 7 years. In absolute terms, overnight stays by locals decreased by -3,876 people (-8.7%) or by -1.1% on average per year since 2013.

At the opposite end are international visitors, which have grown by 54.3% (+3,007 people) over the past eight years, with an average growth of 6.8% on an annual basis. Nearly 87% of overnight stays are from Europe, but the Asian markets - China and India - are emerging.

The region has a weak seasonality in terms of overnight stays and employment. The main reasons are hidden in the offered tourist products and climatic prerequisites, which create

<sup>1</sup> Source: HCI and Institutul Național de Statistică



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the conditions for the development of year-round tourism.

### Conditions for tourist visits - tourist infrastructure

The Plevne-Turnu Magurele region offers protected cultural, historical and natural landmarks, which, along with the development of new attractions, are a major prerequisite for tourism development. The close distance between the individual sites allows the formation and offering of certain thematic tours designed for visitors with different interests and tastes.

The relative proximity to the capitals of Bulgaria and Romania and other major urban centres favours the development of holiday and / or weekend tourism.

The region is best known for the Panorama "Plevne Epic of 1877" and museums located in Plevne, which generate the main tourist traffic, but can offer much more than that. Some examples are the monuments from different eras that have to be seen, national and international festivals and events to visit, as well as active activities and sports activities, cycling routes that can diversify the visit to the region. In addition, the various eco-routes in the vicinity of the target region can be taken into account, as well as the sites for pilgrimage tourism in the region of Ruse.

In addition to Panorama "Plevne Epic of 1877", a number of other cultural and historical sites are included in the destination Memory Route, near which a number of events from the cultural calendar of the municipalities are held.

Nature tourism is developing, subject to individual travel and poorly popularized in the region, whereas in combination with cultural tourism it has the potential to be presented as a preferred option among tourists. For this purpose, information for visitors should be developed and disseminated and specific tourist packages should be structured. For this



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purpose, the experience of another cross-border project in the Danube region can be used to create an integrated package of destinations in the tourist package Plevne - Vratsa - Dolj and Tourist package Montana - Plevne - Olt, prepared under the project Natural Heritage - services related to natural biological resources.

An opportunity for the development of the tourist destination Memory Route is its integration with other tourist products that are recognized as adventure, as potential users of current tourist services - military teambuilding, boot camps and paintball competitions would attract visitors with an attitude to experience elements of adventure tourism. In this regard, in the wider area of the Danube cross-border region there is an opportunity to travel by balloon from starting point Vidin as a tourist service developed within another cross-border project - <http://balloonadventure.eu/bg/>. In addition, you can take advantage of the bike route EuroVelo 6 - the European route Atlantic-Rhone-Danube-Black Sea passing through the town of Nikopol, which is located in the targeted cross-border region of Plevne - Turnu Magurele.

The information infrastructure plays a significant role in the development of a cultural and historical site as a tourist site, and with regard to the sites covered by this strategy, the information infrastructure is well developed. [The Memory Route](#) destination has a relatively well-developed technical infrastructure to meet the needs of tourist sites. The targeted tourist sites are electrified, supplied with water. The communication network is well developed, incl. Internet access and video surveillance of sites in urban areas is available.

Free internet access is not provided at tourist sites located outside the settlements. The possibilities for renting cars from the settlements in / near which the sites are located are very small.

Parking is available to visit the main sites included in the cross-border route. A variety of



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retail outlets are available in the partner cities. In the urban environment of the partner municipalities, various events of the cultural calendar of the municipalities are held, there are opportunities for recreation in a park environment.

Tourist information centers are the main starting point for most visitors, whereas in the region Plevne-Turnu Magurele there are only two such centers, included in the National Network of Tourist Information Centers at the Ministry of Tourism - in Plevne and Pordim.

Currently, the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) in Plevne does not operate with optimal capacity, which is due to the resources provided and the ambition of the municipal program for tourism development.

Unlike the municipality of Plevne, the municipality of Turnu Magurele is rarely perceived as a tourist destination, even by those who live and work in it. Therefore, there is no tourist information center on the territory of the Romanian partner. However, at present another cross-border tourist route Bridges of Time has been developed, covering part of the current region, namely the cross-border region Nikopol - Turnu Magurele. The project is focused on an integrated approach to improving the sustainable use of cross-border cultural heritage in the region of Nikopol - Turnu Magurele, including: restoration of the fortress of Turnu Magurele and construction of an Architectural Park in the town of Nikopol; creation of two clubs for historical reconstructions from Antiquity and the Middle Ages; conducting a 5-day festival with these reconstructions; web portal and smartphone application with locations and information on sites and accommodation in the region.

The project is completed at the moment and the promotion and operation of the route, although focused on different historical periods, will support the visibility as a tourist destination of Turnu Magurele and strengthen the attractiveness of the Military History



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thematic destination [Memory Route](#).

In Pleven there are museums, galleries, cultural institutions and a well-developed cultural calendar of the municipality, which contribute not only to the overall development of tourism, but also serve as an effective communication channel for promoting the developed tourist products and services. Advertising materials have been issued for the existing cultural and historical sites, including those distributed by TICs, as some of the sites are included in advertising and information materials at the national level.

Apart from the sites that fall within the military-historical thematic area of the current project in the municipality of Pleven, the Ancient Fortress Strogozia, the Ancient Town of Ulpia Escus, the Wine Museum and the Nature Reserve in Chernelka have the potential to attract tourists.

On the territory of Pleven municipality according to data from the National Tourist Register<sup>2</sup> at the beginning of 2020 there are 34 places for accommodation, 80 places for catering and restaurants, 52 tour operators and travel agents. Most of them are in Pleven. Most of the offered tourist services are offline (provided on site).

There are only 4 registered guides in the region, but the small number is probably compensated by the available staff of guides to the Regional Museum of Military History, who serve on request the individual sites thereto.

## Accommodation

During the period under review, the supply of accommodation outpaced the demand in the

<sup>2</sup> <https://ntr.tourism.government.bg>



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region, and the accommodation capacity can be defined as sufficient. The total capacity of accommodation in the Plevne region - Turnu Magurele according to data from the National Statistical Institutes in Bulgaria and Romania is 1,606 people, distributed in a total of 38 registered sites - hotels, tourist huts and bungalows, of which 34 in Plevne region. The main part of the accommodation capacity in the region is dominated by accommodation of third and fourth category, offering basic and additional services for visitors - parking, swimming pool, Wi-Fi internet, information services and more.

Apart from the official statistics, there are sites such as "houses", "villas" or "private apartments", where there is an increase in supply in recent years. They are presented mainly in the booking platforms Booking.com and airbnb.com. Although most tourists who choose an apartment or house instead of a hotel are locals, foreign tourists also use these services, mainly when organizing individual trips.

An essential characteristic of the accommodation locations is their categorization. It is a reflection of the conditions offered: device, furniture, amenities, services offered, etc. The presence of a higher relative share of high-category accommodation establishments is a prerequisite for a higher quality of the tourist product.

Foreigners prefer to spend the night in hotels of a higher category. Efforts to attract foreigners to the Bulgarian tourist accommodation are more economically justified. The costs they incur for accommodation and for the consumption of goods and services, typical for tourism, exceed several times the amount of those by Bulgarian citizens.

As can be seen from the data presented below for overnight stays in the municipality of Plevne, the trend is of moderate growth, both for Bulgarian and foreign tourists.



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**Table 1 Average annual occupancy of accommodation in Pleven region as of 2018**

Region	Average annual occupation / 1 bed
Pleven	62 days /year

Source: НСИ България

**Table 2 Number of realized overnight stays in Pleven municipality**

Year	Bulgarians	Foreigners	Tourist days
2013	23,696	4,147	42,632
2014	27,491	5,234	48,212
2015	23,730	6,383	47,290
2016	17,610	5,631	40,671
2017	19,278	7,177	46,771
2018	22,163	7,711	49,126
2019	23,629	8,893	64,937

Source: Data from the Tourist Information Center

In Pleven district most accommodation facilities operate in Pleven. During the period under



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review, the number of overnight stays decreased. Based on information from the conducted interviews, there is a tendency for tourists not to spend the night, but to visit sites as part of a larger route, which does not have a positive impact on the sector.

Data from the National Statistical Institute of Romania provides the following information on attendance in Teleorman County, which includes the municipality of Turnu Magurele, as well as the municipality itself.

**Table 3 Number of overnight stays in accommodation in Teleorman County**

Type of tourists	2016	2017	2018
Total	18022	18695	18673
Romanians	15863	17138	16899
Foreigners	2159	1557	1774

Source: National Statistical Institute, Romania - <http://statistici.insse.ro>

**Table 4 Number of overnight stays in accommodation in the Turnu Magurele municipality**

Type of tourists	2016	2017	2018
Total	1620	1548	1686

Source: National Statistical Institute, Romania - <http://statistici.insse.ro>

The data show low activity of tourist activities in the region and the municipality, despite the





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declared potential in the strategic documents.

### Visits to the tourist destination

There is no established image of the cross-border region as a single destination. With regard to tourist products, we can conclude that with the exception of Pleven, in the rest of the region the tourist potential and visibility are poorly developed. The main tourist products are focused on several sites of higher importance, which are in the thematic area of the destination Memory Route and generate mainly visits from the domestic markets. The formation of tourism products is carried out on a project basis based on short-term relations, but there are no developed sustainable integrated cross-border products based on common tourism resources. This is typical for the whole cross-border Danube region due to the specifics of its economic development.

The cultural-historical tourist product is the main one in the cross-border region Pleven-Turnu Magurele. Based on historical and cultural values that are recognized and known, there is a need for sustainable and modern presentation and creation of new accompanying tourist services and opportunities to attract different target groups, taking into account the main trends and basing the choice of destination on the experience.

The presence of the ferry connection Nikopol-Turnu Magurele allows visitors to the developed destination [Memory Route](#) to be tourists from the cross-border region and tourists from river cruises, and their importance for the development of tourist products and attractions in the region can be activated. At the moment, the opportunities are not used, as through organized bus transport, tourists from cruises go directly for a day visit to the city of Veliko Tarnovo in Bulgaria, or to the city of Bucharest in Romania. Only a small part of them go to Pleven if for no more than half a day, and they usually pass through Turnu Magurele. Measures must be



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taken to include the region and in particular the destination **Memory Route** in the tourist routes of river cruise organizers. In addition, the route should be included in tourist packages that are well developed for the region - mainly cultural and historical tourist route Veliko Tarnovo and Ruse, visitors to the Roman Festival Eagle on the Danube in the Roman military camp Nove in Svishtov.

According to the Tourist Information Center, tourists who have visited art galleries and museums in Pleven are as follows:

**Table 5 Number of visitors to tourist sites in the municipality of Pleven in 2019**

Tourist site	Number of visits (Bulgarians)	Number of visits (Foreigners)
Regional history museum	26 122	339
"Storgozia" fortress	12 991	86
Ancient city "Ulpia Escus"	441	70
Regional Museum of Military History - Pleven	123 823	20,565
Iliya Beshkov Art Gallery	16 245	415
Art Gallery Donation "Svetlin Rusev Collection"	7 976	1284



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Total:	177 598	22,759
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Source: Data from the Tourist Information Center

**Table 6 Number of visitors in 2018**

Tourist site	Number of visits (Bulgarians)	Number of visits (Foreigners)
Regional history museum	15 929	269
"Storgozia" fortress	9 729	98
Ancient city "Ulpia Escus"	214	54
Regional Museum of Military History - Pleven	124 372	13,144
Iliya Beshkov Art Gallery	11 065	637
Art Gallery Donation "Svetlin Rusev Collection"	8 303	1,168
Total:	169 612	15,370

Source: Data from the Tourist Information Center

From the provided data we can report an increase in the number of visitors to the main tourist sites in the municipality of Pleven, as positive is the fact that the Regional Museum of Military History - Pleven, as the main site of [Memory Route](#), has a significantly higher number





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of visitors compared to other sites, and that there is an increase in the number of visitors in 2019 compared to 2018.

The main tourist destination in the region is the city of Plevne, whereas the most visited sites are the Regional History Museum and Panorama "Plevne Epic 1877". The annual program of the municipality in the field of tourism is not ambitious, in terms of resources allocated, moreover the activities of the Tourist Information Center cannot be defined as effective. Nevertheless, in the context of various documents of national and regional order, the potential of cultural and historical heritage as an engine of economic development is presented. With the development of the cultural and historical heritage outside the city of Plevne there is an opportunity to create new tourist routes and products, such as those included in the current Marketing Strategy.

Such statistics on the number of visitors to cultural and historical sites and cultural institutions for the municipality of Turnu Magurele are not maintained, but the Strategy for Sustainable Development of Teleorman County shows the importance and potential of the municipality for the development of cultural tourism.

#### 8. Market evaluation of the planned tourist products and services under the project

Against the background of continuous growth of the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria (persons staying overnight increased by nearly 76%, with an average annual growth of 9%, and overnight stays increased by 72%, with the main growth-generating regions being Constanta County (Romania), Dobrich, Veliko Tarnovo and Ruse (Republic of Bulgaria)), the market share of the Plevne-Turnu Magurele region is declining. Despite the growth in number of tourist staying overnight and overnight stays, growth remains well below the average for the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region.



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Tourism occupies a relatively small part of the economy of the Plevne - Turnu Magurele region. In 2017, tourism contributes directly below 0.5% (EUR 4.999 million) of GDP in Plevne region, and the contribution of the sector in Turnu Magurele to the GDP of Teleorman County is below 0.01% (EUR 0.250 million). At the same time, it generates less than 1% of total employment in the region. The total impact of tourism (including indirect and induced) is estimated at EUR 14.694 million, an increase of 2% on an annual basis.<sup>3</sup>

The market potential of the developed total of 9 tourist products and services is formed by the symbiosis between the following interconnected elements:

- **Authenticity.** The joint destination has a strong cultural and historical value and preserved authenticity of the sites in it. It has a certain territorial concentration of tourist potential and specific topics - military history. Through this feature, the route focuses the attention of tourists with a strong affinity for cultural and historical heritage and authenticity of experiences.
- **Attractiveness.** The route is territorially differentiated in the cross-border region of the municipalities of Plevne and Turnu Magurele, which is characterized by rich cultural and historical potential. Despite its unrecognizability as a tourist destination for both foreign and domestic tourists, the diverse resources available in the wider cross-border region are a prerequisite for promoting the region and developing year-round tourism. The chosen thematic line of the route - the military-historical heritage - "coexists" with other elements of the cultural environment of global, international and national importance: archeological, architectural, ethnographic and religious sites, monuments of totalitarian and contemporary art, and is further upgraded by the attractiveness and relevance of the services offered - paintball, boot camps, thematic team building

<sup>3</sup> Source: HCI and Institutul Național de Statistică



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events.

- **Opportunities for experiences.** The tourist destination with the defined tourist products and services has the potential to respond to the trends in consumer demand. Cultural tourism in Europe is growing, and the driver of this development is raising the level of education. On this basis, history, culture and art will play an increasingly important role in shaping the tourist motivation, in organizing and finding meaning in travel. Motivation in cultural tourism is slowly shifting from narrowly specific cultural interests to more generalized ones. This trend is mixed with experiences and adventures with the possibility of educational elements through the tourist services provided by the project. This is reflected in the formation of the products, as well as the proposed combination of cultural and cognitive aspects and entertainment and sports. The opportunity to combine with the resources for medical tourism of the municipality of Pleven provide an opportunity to further attract visitors.

In order to unleash the market potential of the destination **Memory Route**, it is extremely important to focus on the partnerships that need to be formed. The main beneficiaries of this strategy are the partners in the cross-border project - Pleven Municipality and Turnu Magurele Municipality. They will be responsible for its implementation, but the active imposition of the thematic destination Memory Route and the included tourism products and services requires the activity of the following internal stakeholders who will benefit from its optimal functioning and overall development of the region's tourism potential:

- Museums' cultural institutions;
- Tour operators and agencies;
- Business relating to accommodation and catering, as well as local traders;
- NGOs in the field of economic development and in the field of tourism and cross-border



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cooperation.

The entry into the market of a complete joint tourist destination Memory Route, including 9 specific products and services, increases the competitiveness of each of the stakeholders in the relevant market niche in the cross-border region of Pleven - Turnu Magurele. General visibility and recognizability of the cross-border region as a tourist destination is achieved, which potentially leads to attracting a larger number of tourists. The connection of the considered destination with regional tourist products in general packages offered by the tour operators provides complementarity in the tourist offer on the one hand and the possibility to combine with other types of tourism, contributing to the full emotional connection, on the other.

### General tendencies in tourism

Ranking of countries in According to the Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019 of the World Economic Forum, the ranking of the two countries is as follows:

- Bulgaria - 45th place among 140 surveyed countries
- Romania - 56th place among 140 surveyed countries

### Global tourism development

By 2019, the tourism sector is characterized by traditional upward development, which is the basis for the positive growth of many economies in developed tourist countries.

According to data from the May edition of the World Tourism Barometer in 2018, the number of visits by foreign tourists worldwide exceeds 1.4 billion, an increase over 2017 of 5.6%.



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According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (WTO), the highest growth in inbound tourism is in the Middle East at 10%, Africa at 7%, followed by the Asia-Pacific region at 6.5%, Europe at 6.1%, North and South America at 3.1%.

The number of international tourists worldwide is expected to grow by an average of 3.3% per year between 2010 and 2030, to reach 1.8 billion by 2030. During the same period, arrivals in emerging destinations (+ 4.4% per year) are expected to double compared to those in developed economies (+ 2.2% per year).

According to preliminary data for 2018, among the countries with the highest revenues from international tourism are the United States - 214.5 billion dollars, Spain - 73.8 billion dollars, France - 67.4 billion dollars, Thailand - 63 billion dollars, Great Britain - 51.9 billion dollars, Italy - 49.3 billion dollars, Australia - 45 billion dollars and others.

Overall, there is a stable positive trend in the dynamics of travel, with periodic declines in some destinations affected by accidents or terrorist threats. Better air fares, as well as better connectivity, have led to some reorientation of tourist flows. Thus, the main factors in deciding on a travel choice are security and connectivity.

### European tourism development

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO) at the United Nations, Europe is the most visited continent in the world in 2018, with the total number of tourist visits by foreigners being about 713 million. They increased by 6.1% compared to 2017.

By regions in Europe, the highest growth in 2018 compared to 2017 is observed in Southern Europe: 7,8%, followed by Central and Eastern Europe: 6%, Western Europe: 5,9% and Northern Europe: 0,6%.



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According to unconfirmed data for 2018 from European destinations, the largest increase in the number of visits of German tourists compared to 2017 is observed in Montenegro, Slovenia and Turkey. The largest increase is in the number of visits of Dutch tourists to Slovenia, Turkey, Montenegro, Serbia and Estonia. The largest increase in the number of French tourists is registered in Slovenia, Montenegro, Turkey, Latvia, Serbia, and Italian tourists - Turkey, Cyprus and Greece. The highest growth of tourists from the UK is registered in Montenegro, Slovenia, Turkey and Bulgaria, while the number of Russian tourists is growing fastest in Malta, Denmark and Turkey.

The forecast for the coming years is favourable. The incoming tourist flow is expected to increase annually by about 3% in the countries of Northern Europe, by about 2% in Western Europe, by about 3-4% in Southern Europe and in Central and Eastern Europe.

In the medium term until 2022, an increase in visits to the region of Central and Eastern Europe is expected, as follows: from Russia - by 43.8%, from India - by 30.3%, from China - by 27.8%, from Japan - by 13.5%.

### Tourism development at national level

Bulgaria marks an increase in visits by foreign tourists in 2018 from 10 of the top 15 markets. The leading five markets for inbound tourism by number of tourist visits to Bulgaria in 2018 are Romania with over 1.3 million, Greece with over 1.1 million, Germany with 850 thousand, Turkey with 625 thousand and Northern Macedonia with 559 thousand tourists. 2018 is extremely successful for Bulgaria in the markets of Ukraine, Romania, Israel, Great Britain and Moldova. Of the countries thus listed, the increase in incoming tourist flow in 2018 exceeds 10%, and from Romania and Ukraine the growth is even over 20%. In the 2018/2019



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winter season, the total number of tourist visits from the UK reached nearly 94 thousand, increasing by nearly 50%.

Domestic tourism is especially important for the development of Bulgaria as a year-round destination. Over 75% of all Bulgarian tourists have chosen to make a tourist trip only within Bulgaria in 2018. This clearly proves that the Bulgarian appreciates the benefits of domestic tourism.

According to data from the National Statistical Institute, in 2018 there were 3,458 categorized accommodation places with 10 or more beds in the country. The number of functioning beds in them in 2018 is 335 597. Compared to 2017, the total number of functional accommodation with 10 or more beds increased by 112, and the number of functional beds in them decreased by 13 thousand.

In 2018, the total number of overnight stays in categorized accommodation with 10 or more beds was 26,845,013, and they increased by 3% compared to 2017.

In 2018, the number of nights spent by Bulgarian citizens in categorized accommodation with 10 or more beds was 9,096,088, an increase of 1.6%. The realized overnight stays by foreigners are 17 748 925, increasing by 3.8% compared to 2017. The largest number of realized overnight stays are tourists from Germany - 3 527 558 overnight stays, from Romania - 1 883 016 overnight stays, from Poland - 1 847 172, from Great Britain - 1 632 816 nights, from Russia - 1 255 018. Poland and Ukraine have the highest growth rates in 2018 compared to 2017 in the leading markets in terms of the number of overnight stays.



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## Global trends

This part of the strategy defines trends in the market of tourist products and services that affect demand, the behaviour of target groups, the definition of generating markets and the approach to marketing specific tourist destinations and routes.

## Demographic and behavioural trends

*The change in demographic data is expected to have a major impact on demand for tourism services in the coming years.*

- Growth of the global middle class and an aging population - the global population as a whole will be richer and older in the coming decades
- The importance of the new generations - Millennials and Generation Z, which are becoming key factors in mobility and their behaviour when travelling can lead to significant changes in the tourism market. They tend to travel independently and be open to temporary use and rental of products or services
- Middle age - Increasingly, lifestyle is the deciding factor in choosing a trip, not the age group. Studies show that the 30-50-year-old group is more interested in a relaxing holiday, while the 65-year-olds are more interested in opportunities for communication and new experiences.
- Generation X - born in the late 1960s to the late 1970s. They are the generation with the greatest financial opportunities and travel time. They currently spend the most money on travel compared to their younger or older counterparts



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- Aging population - there is a growing interest in tourist services compared to previous generations

### Main summarized market trends

- The new destinations are preferred by higher-income tourists, especially those in the older age group and among young customers.
- Tourists already have a negative attitude towards group travel, with the exception of the Russian and Chinese markets, the number of young people who make tourist trips alone or with friends is increasing
- The share of individual travel is increasing, to which tour operators respond with the introduction of the "do-it-yourself" service, development of dynamic packages
- The main motive for choosing a destination is the expected experience
- The role of the Internet as a source of information before and during travel, as well as a means of purchasing tourism products is increasing
- The role of social networks, photo, video and content sharing sites is increasing as a means of information and experience sharing, which influences the choice of destination
- The process of digitalization in tourism is ongoing worldwide, in Europe and in Bulgaria
- More and more tourists want to take part in various activities during the trip
- The language barrier is less and less important



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- The number of tourist trips in which more than one type of tourism is combined within one trip is growing
- The tourist flow to Bulgaria has increased significantly in recent years
- The problem of "over-tourism" implies the redirection of tourists from extremely busy tourist destinations to other less exploited
- Significant growth of medical tourism is expected in the coming years
- The forecast for the coming years is favourable. The incoming tourist flow is expected to increase annually by about 3% in the countries of Northern Europe, by about 2% in Western Europe, by about 3-4% in Southern Europe and in Central and Eastern Europe.

### New technologies

New technologies continue to restructure markets and sectors around the world. In recent decades, technological advances have made travel more accessible and easy for many people, and in the future it has the potential to completely change the concept of tourism (eg, integrated ticketing, mobile payment systems, etc.).

### Virtual reality technologies

- They continue to improve, with a trend towards virtual tourism to complement or replace physical travel for some travellers. On the other hand, people are living more and more digital and connected lives, the possibilities for analog, natural experiences during travel can become a preferred alternative to purely digital experiences;



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- Virtual tourism experience can increasingly provide an opportunity for alternative visits to places considered too environmentally or culturally sensitive to allow access to physical visitors.

### Mobile reservations

There is a tendency for reservations to be made online and via mobile devices, and this transition will continue to grow in 2020.

- Google Data shows that searches related to travel "tonight" and "today" in 2017 - 2018 increased by over 150% and reservations were made via mobile devices.
- Online reviews have the biggest impact on bookings - it's no secret in the industry that TripAdvisor's good ranking can have a positive impact on business growth.
- Social networks have a huge influence when deciding on a vacation.

### Shared economy

The sharing economy has grown rapidly in recent years to cover a significant part of economic activity. Home-sharing platforms such as Airbnb, HomeAway and Couchsurfing are already significant competitors in the hospitality industry.

A new form of sharing economy for 2019, according to Trekksoft, is the resale of already purchased flights or vacations. SpareFare has created an online platform through which people who are unable to use their purchased flights and holiday packages can sell them at reduced prices to other users.



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Future growth in culinary tourism and travel can also be expected in the sharing economy as consumers become more aware of the opportunity to eat at someone's home when traveling.

### Changes in travel style and security

Taking into account the current trends and dynamics in the development of the tourism sector, in 2019 there are a number of changes in the way tourists travel, including:

#### Solo Travelers

According to TrekkSoft's Travel Trends Report 2019, quoting Travel Agent Central, 25% of Millennials said they plan to travel alone in the next 12 to 24 months.

#### Last-minute reservations

According to the analysis of TrekkSoft in 2018, 39% of tourists have chosen to book their vacation at the last minute. Most mobile reservations are made at the last minute, which makes the process of planning for operators and travel agents more difficult.

#### Visiting new destinations

Millennials are showing increasing interest in new and little-known destinations. According to Trekksoft travel agent Srprs. me organizes tourist trips, where tourists have the opportunity to visit the company's website and choose certain criteria for their vacation. In 2018, Trekksoft's analysis shows that there is a 22% increase in visits to new destinations, mainly among tourists from China, the United States, Latin America and Spain.



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## Skip the line tours

There is a "skip the line" trend, in which using the official websites, tourists have the opportunity to buy tickets for their chosen attractions and "skip the line". Tickets allow tourists to miss the queues for buying tickets, but not the queues for security checks.

## Experiences are the basis of everything

Tourists around the world are increasingly looking for unique one-time experiences as well as more adventures.

One of the new trends in the field of tourism next year is related to local experiences - tourists like to immerse themselves in the local culture when visiting a destination. For those wanting to do what locals do, AirBnB has developed a new feature in its platform - the Airbnb experience. This is an activity whose content is generated by locals offering various activities and experiences on Airbnb. This capability of the platform was launched in November 2016 and has grown to over 20,000 experiences, of which 7,000 are in 400 different locations in Europe.

Digital nomads - With access to reliable Wi-Fi almost anywhere in the world, advances in online communication tools and professional collaboration spaces in major cities around the world, it will be easier than ever to work from different destinations around the world.

Adventure tourism - With each passing year the interest in adventure tourism grows. In this type of tourism there is interest in cave climbing, cycling, rafting and other activities. This type of tourism is one of the fastest growing. Challenging situations such as completing a



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course, a marathon for the first time or a walk to the Santiago de Camino, for example, are a major factor in choosing a destination for adventure-loving travellers.

### Competitive destinations

On the territory of Bulgaria and Romania there are established cultural and historical tourist destinations that have been operating for years and are widely known among Bulgarian and foreign tourists, as well as those that in recent years have been socialized and promoted. This puts current tourism products and services in a highly competitive environment, but there are two possibilities: the specific theme of the current destination - military-historical and related alternative tourism products, which are planned within the project and the possibility of integrating the current destination into a more comprehensive regional tourism product.

### Specialized tourism

A study on passion groups by the European Tourism Commission (ETC) presents a new global approach to tourism marketing through thematic segmentation based on interest targeting rather than demographics. A consequence of this new focus is that ETC refrains from the traditional approach to carrying out promotional activities. Based on these conclusions, the Horizon 2022 Marketing Strategy was formed, which in the next three years aims through joint efforts of ETC member countries, including Bulgaria, to promote the European tourism product in distant markets such as China by mapping the interests of international tourists.

The promotional activities focus on the three topics with the highest score of the study, namely "slow adventure", "urban creativity" and "remembrance / commemoration", as well as on "gastronomy tourism".



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When offering specialized types of tourism, it is good to focus on the experience / adventure. The tourist services and products targeted by the current marketing strategy fall within the scope of the cultural and educational tourism. For their effective marketing it is important to emphasize the uniqueness of the joint tourist destination with the accompanying various forms - nature, history, culture, special experience and additional services.

### Opportunities for integration / interaction with other projects / initiatives

When promoting the 9 tourism products and services developed within the project, it is good to explore the possibility of conducting joint activities to promote or include in joint tourism packages with tourist destinations, products and services within the following projects:

- Project "Bridges of time: An integrated approach to improving the sustainable use of cross-border cultural heritage in Nikopol and Turnu Magurele", funded by the Interreg V-A Romania-Bulgaria Program 2014-2020.
- Joint Cultural and Historical Product Route Roman border on the territory of the cross-border region, implemented by the Association of Danube Municipalities
- Development of the Danube tourist region - part of the Updated National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development until 2030 - development of cultural and historical routes related to the Russian-Turkish Liberation War
- Priority product cultural tourism - part of the Updated National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development until 2030
- NATBIOT - Natural Heritage - services related to natural / biological resources in the cross-border region Dolj, Olt, Mehedinti - Vidin, Montana, Vratsa and Plevna with a 7-day tourist package Montana-Plevna-Olt, which includes Kaylaka Park, the ancient



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fortress Strict and Grivitsa Memorial Park and 7-day tourist package Pleven-Vratsa-Dolj, starting from the city of Pleven

- CBC Project Danube Ecotourism
- Balloon Adventure - a new joint tourist product in the region of Vidin and Craiova
- Istrian-Pontica Cross-Border Cultural Tourism Destination Project
- Tourist destination The riches of the West, promoted by the Ministry of Tourism
- Wine destination with the participation of the Municipality of Pleven, promoted by the Ministry of Tourism
- Project for construction of a 3D mobile platform simulator of participation in the Battle of Pleven as part of the exhibition of Panorama "Pleven Epic", funded by the Urban Development Fund.

A specific challenge of the current strategy is to upgrade and interact with measures and tools defined in the Marketing Strategy for the promotion of cultural and historical heritage in the cross-border area of Nikopol-Turnu Magurele.

## 9. SWOT analysis

The present analysis outlines the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the partners in the process of promoting the region of Pleven - Turnu Magurele as an attractive thematic tourist destination and the integrated tourism products developed within the project. The conclusions of this analysis are the basis of the strategic part of the joint marketing strategy and its implementation program.



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## Strengths

- Tourist sites with significant potential, in a broader context a variety of natural and cultural-historical resources
- High price competitiveness
- Tourist services that have the potential to diversify visitors to tourist sites and the region as a whole
- Numerous tourist products available in the cross-border region that can be used as a complementary tourist route to provide a weekend or several-day trip
- Availability of good accommodation, dining and urban activities
- Relatively well-developed infrastructure near the sites
- Good communication and internet services

## Weaknesses

- Insufficient investments in the development of the museum network / cultural sites and the attractive presentation of the exhibits, small number of visitors
- Lack of attractive services accompanying the tourist sites
- Lack of their clear positioning and branding as a common tourist product / route
- Lack of promotion as a common route by tour operators and lack of connection with other regional tourist routes
- Lack of purposeful activities for marketing the tourist potential of the region and the respective sites
- A small number of tourists who prefer to spend the night and other activities related to generating revenue in the local market
- Low income from tourism



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## Opportunities

- Creating and popularising an attractive tourist route
- Increasing the number of visitors, including those staying overnight in the region
- Increasing the income of local businesses from tourism-related services
- Ensuring participation in various fairs and exhibitions, positioning of the tourist route, through donor programs or programs of the Ministry of Tourism
- Increasing visits to other sites in the region
- Inclusion of sites as part of a cultural-educational route, together with sites close in location or subject matter
- Increasing influence of technology in the development of tourism
- Increasing number of trips at the expense of duration and search for new destinations
- Growing popularity of specialized types of tourism
- Opportunity for inclusion of tourist services and products in the implementation of medical tourism in the municipality of Plevna

## Threats

- Insufficient financial resources, administrative and institutional capacity in the partner municipalities for maintenance and development of tourism products and services
- Difficulties in providing a marketing budget to promote the tourist route
- Growing number, creativity and flexibility of tourist offers (dynamic packages)
- Strong competitors nationally and internationally in terms of products with potential for development such as cultural and historical tourism



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## 10. Strategic part of the Marketing Strategy

### General objective

*To position and sustainably develop the targeted tourist destination within the project "Memory Route: Sustainable cross-border tourism products for Grivitsa Memorial Park and Turnu Fortress" as a recognizable and popular year-round and modern destination in the period 2020-2027.*

The general objective formulated in this way is the vision and the forecast that as a result of the implementation of the joint marketing strategy the problems facing the promotion of the specific cultural and historical heritage of the two municipalities and the achievement of economic growth in the sector based on cultural tourism will be overcome.

The specific objectives of the strategy are built on the SMART methodology - they are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. They are linked and derived from the common objective, synchronized with the main goal of the cross-border project and the specifics of this document - to help increase tourism attractiveness in the cross-border area, improve sustainable use of cultural heritage and promote cultural tourism between partners in the region of CBC. The joint strategy will support the realization of the potential of cross-border cultural heritage as a prerequisite for achieving growth within the municipalities for which tourism is identified as a developing element of their economic complex.



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## Specific objectives

- Establishing a positive image of the cross-border region as a tourist destination and increasing its visibility as a year-round destination with a distinctive identity and cultural and historical heritage
- Positioning and promotion of the integrated tourist destination as part of a common destination in the Danube region and / or a common destination with other Balkan countries with a focus on attracting tourists from distant markets
- Positioning and promotion of integrated tourism products and services in target markets and among target groups
- Development of the group of regular visitors and attracting new ones
- Using the potential of digital marketing, online channels, including social networks and new forms of communication in search of specific approaches for popularizing
- Reaching a wider audience by developing new channels such as mobile applications and SEO optimization of existing pages

## Time frame

The time horizon is set for 2027 in order to create a precondition for linking the strategy with the system of documents for planning and management of municipalities and programs for implementation of the projects in the strategic and planning documents financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds for the forthcoming period.

Within the general time horizon of the strategy, three stages are defined, which logically follow the development and market introduction of the developed tourist services and products.



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### Short-term stage - 2020-2022

Creation and development of the integrated tourist product - development as a main tourist destination / development as an accompanying tourist destination.

### Medium-term stage - 2023-2024

Occupying a market share through the integrated tourist product.

### Long-term stage - 2025-2027

Optimal exploitation of the integrated tourist product and increase of its market share.

#### 11. Target groups and target markets

Based on sectoral analyses of the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria, potential target groups of the developed tourist products and services within the cross-border project are derived, which correlate with those specified in the application form of the project.

In the period January - April 2019, the countries of the European Union continue to be the most important generating market for international tourism in Bulgaria with a relative share of 54.7% and a total volume of 957,253 tourist visits (growth of 3.9%).

According to the Ministry of Tourism in Bulgaria, the 15 generating markets for 2018 are: Romania, Greece, Germany, Turkey, Macedonia, Russia, Poland, Serbia, Great Britain, Ukraine, Israel, Moldova, Czech Republic, France, Italy. The change in % in the number of tourist visits of foreigners in Bulgaria for the period 2017/2018 from the following leading markets is noticeable: Romania - an increase of 20.90%, Ukraine by 24.40% Moldova by 11.30%.

#### Tourist profile

The market of cultural tourism depends on the offered products and services and their way of



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use, but is characterized by a clear trend of rapid development.

In general, consumers of cultural forms of tourism fall into three groups, reflecting different levels of commitment to culture:

- **Lovers of culture and history** - The trip is motivated by a cultural element. Their interest may be specifically targeted or a general interest. The focus can be on permanent sites - architectural elements / buildings or moments of opportunity, such as festivals.
- **Explorers** - This type of tourists have a broad interest in culture and attractions. A major element of their vacation is inspired by the cultural possibilities of the destination.
- **Incidental tourists** - Tourists who usually have another primary reason for their trip and participate in cultural activities that are in accordance with their travel plans or according to the chosen route.

## Demographic and behavioral profiling of the tourist

### Generation Z - 15-24 y.o.

- They freely use technology and are open to new ideas and innovations
- They rely on the recommendation of relatives, personal experiences, online opinions and assessments and social networks
- Communication approach - can be reached through online targeting on sites, applications and social networks, telemarketing



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## Working millennials / young families - 25-39 y.o.

- Digital experts, ambitious, adaptive, curious
- They rely on the recommendation of relatives, personal experiences, online opinions and assessments and social networks
- Communication approach - social networks and travel applications, sites and applications with opinions and ratings, offers in hotel networks

## Middle age - 40-54 y.o.

- Technically literate, confident, balanced, affluent
- They rely on recommendations from family and relatives, personal experiences, tourist sites
- Communication approach - can be reached both through online channels such as travel sites, sites and applications with opinions and ratings, and through travel offices and agencies

## Senior - 55+ y.o.

- Confident and balanced
- They rely on recommendations from family and relatives, personal experiences, tourist agencies and packages
- Communication approach - can be reached mainly through travel offices and agencies

## Profile of Bulgarian tourists

- 80% traveled only in Bulgaria in 2017.
- 40% travel at least once a year in total in the country and / or abroad
- Sea, cultural, mountain and balneo, wellness and spa tourism are preferred



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- Long vacations during the summer and winter seasons, weekends and holidays outside the active seasons
- Overcoming seasonality - 29% of overnight stays are in areas with developed cultural tourism
- The main sources of travel information are the Internet and recommendations from friends
- 64% of those traveling in Bulgaria in 2017 used the Internet for reservations
- Important factors for satisfaction are complete rest and tranquility, good weather and easy access to the destination
- Mostly young, active people travel, as well as graduates and those with higher incomes

Domestic tourism is especially important for the development of Bulgaria as a year-round destination. Over 75% of all Bulgarian tourists have chosen to make a tourist trip only within Bulgaria in 2018.

As part of the development of the strategy, an online survey was conducted among stakeholders and potential users of tourism services and products. The following are summarized results:



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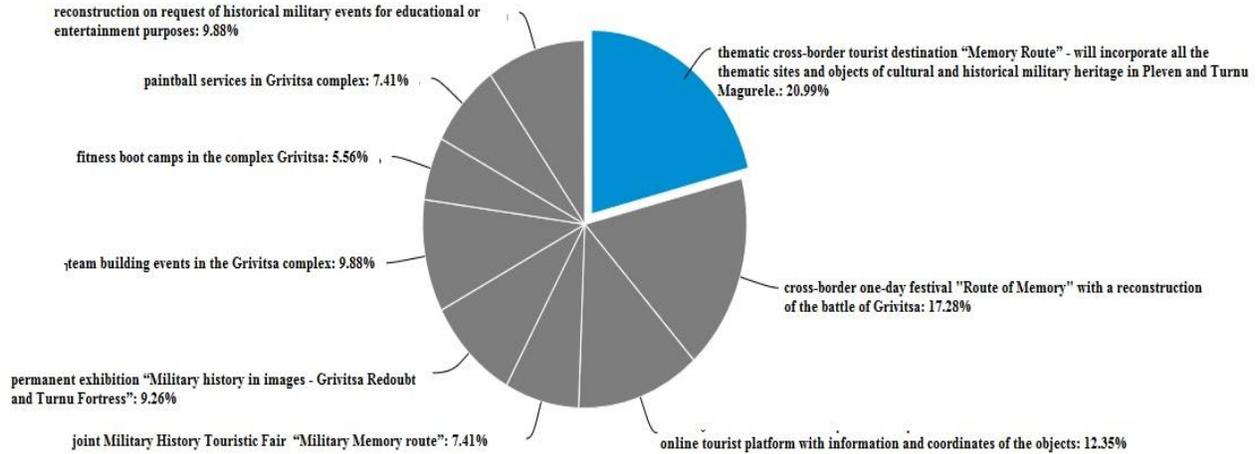
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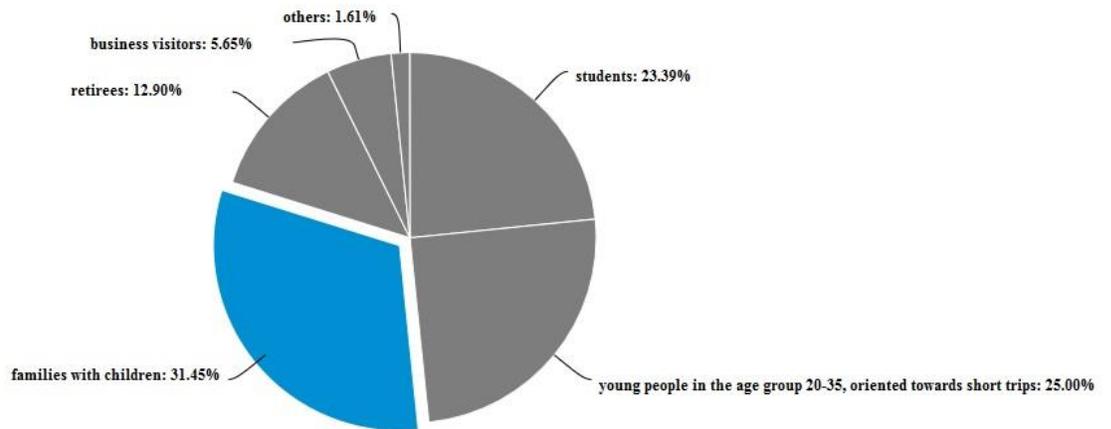
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## Which of the following tourist products and services would you visit and / or use?

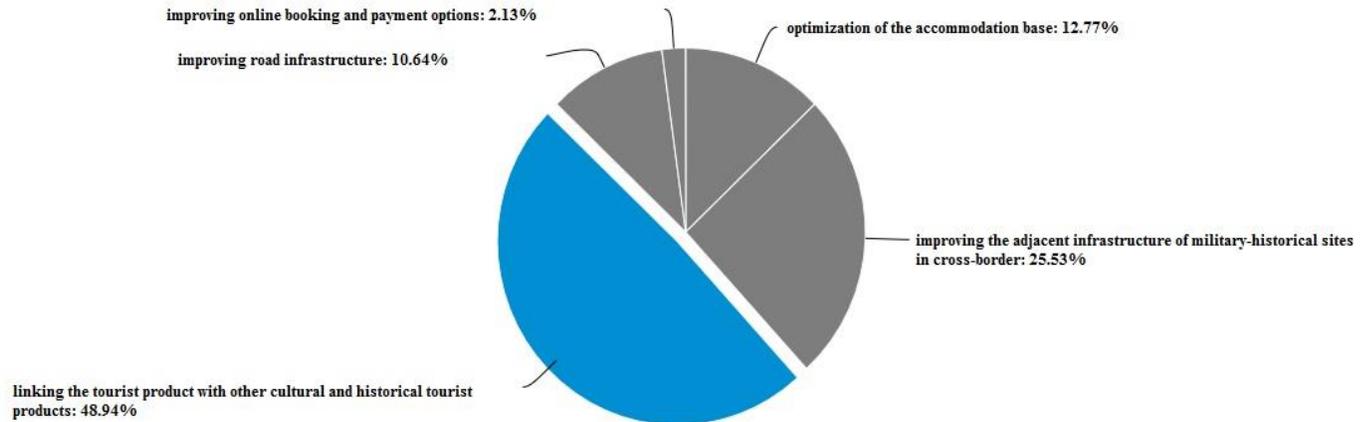


## In your opinion, which of the mentioned groups are the main users of the offered tourist products and services?

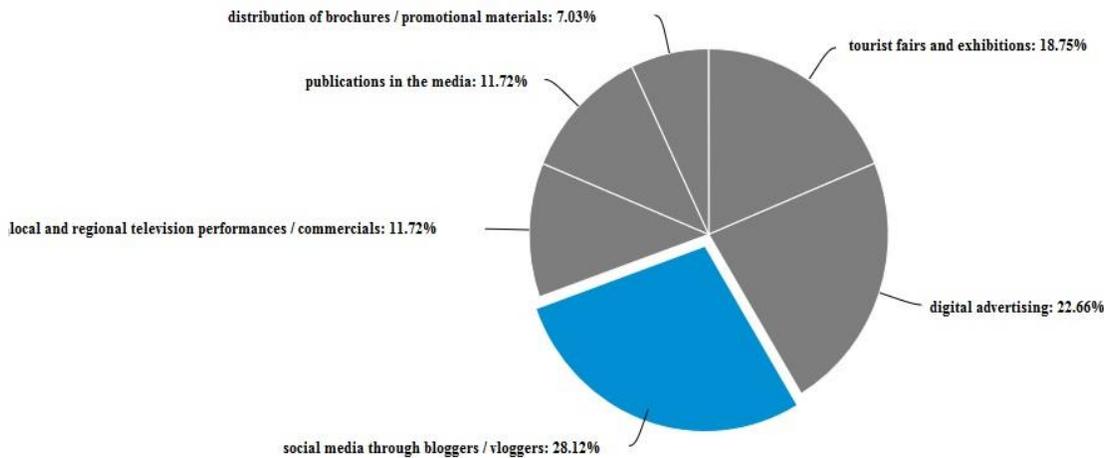




In your opinion, what additional services and / or infrastructure should be developed in the cross-border area in order to realize the optimally defined tourist products and services?



In your opinion, what are the main channels for promoting and establishing on the market the developed tourist products and services?





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## Target groups

Based on the analysis of data on the type of tourists in the region, as well as the type of tourists at national level with interest in cultural and educational tourism and the main generating markets for both countries, we can derive the following main target groups for the overall tourist destination. tourist products and services:

- Middle-income families with children
- Students
- Young people (20-35 years old) for cultural and adventure tourism, oriented towards short trips
- Visitors 55+ with average income
- Participants in organized trips, mainly foreigners - participating in cruise tourism or in a tourist package with a more extensive route on the territory of both countries
- Managers and employees in small and medium-sized companies in order to hold team building events

The table below presents the potential interest of the individual target groups in the developed 9 tourism products and services.



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**Table 7 Potential interest of the target groups in the 9 tourism products and services**

	Families with children	Students	Young people for cultural and adventure tourism	Visitors 50+	Participants in organized trips	Representatives of business
thematic cross-border tourist destination "Memory Route"	x	x	x	x	x	
one-day festival "Memory route"	x	x		x	x	
trilingual tourist platform	x		x	x		
1 joint military-historical tourist fair "Military memory route"	x	x		x	x	
permanent exhibition "Military History in Images - Redoubt Grivitsa and Turnu Fortress"		x		x	x	



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team building events						X
fitness bootcamps		X	X			
paintball	X	X	X			X
reenactments on request of historical military events	X	X	X	X	X	

### Target markets

Bulgaria is a popular destination for seaside vacations, winter tourism, cultural tourism and spa and balneo tourism, and the products with potential for development are city breaks, visits to festivals, concerts, etc., wine and gourmet tourism. In most neighboring countries there is an increase in personal travel for tourism to Bulgaria. This opens the possibility for the development of the tourist product in these markets, which are characterized by the main tourist trips being within their own country.

Advantages of our country among tourists from neighboring countries are:

- Proximity of the destination
- Attractiveness for a short stay
- A variety of leisure opportunities combined with excellent price offers, both in the main tourist packages (accommodation, transport) and in the secondary ones, such as food, sports activities, shopping





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## Weaknesses:

- Deficits in the image of year-round tourism and niche tourism

The main target markets are defined as:

- **Internal (for both countries) target markets** - huge potential for building "year-round" tourism and sustainable development of tourism - weekend vacations, festivals of culture and art, sporting events, team building and other corporate events

Domestic tourism in the region is the main generating market both in terms of visits and revenues.

- **External target markets** - markets with special interests to strengthen positions as year-round destinations - Moldova, Russia, Balkan and European countries

In principle, the motive for the foreign tourist when choosing for cultural tourism are the sights. Their uniqueness and ability to provide an additional experience that is able to leave lasting traces in the minds of tourists is leading in choosing a route. In the case of the specific theme of the route, external markets are defined in order to generate an emotional connection, interest in knowledge and experience related to specific historical events.

When defining external markets from European countries, emphasis is placed on the main strategic and priority foreign markets for the two countries, visitors of which have a focus on cultural and educational tourism. These are Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, France, Spain.



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12. Strategy for marketing the integrated tourism product - identification of stakeholders, vision for development and marketing goals, marketing mix, activities for implementation of the strategy and expected results

The success of the positioning and promotion of each tourist destination and related tourism products and services depends on many factors that are the drivers behind the marketing strategy:

**Table 8 Factors for positioning and establishing a tourist destination**

General factors	Factors aimed at consumer choice
The right choice of target markets by geographical principle (countries or regions, depending on the size of the market, the competitiveness of this market)	The need for the customer to be unique
Socio-demographic target markets (who are the key audiences, what are the potential drivers of innovation)	Orientation towards the experience
Target markets by media principle (types of media with the largest impact in each market and key audience)	Preference for unstructured / non-package travel
Consideration of competition by markets and types of tourism	Focus on the emotion and experience that the destinations provide, not the destinations themselves





Financial factors (market coverage, key audiences)	Online orientation, especially in the phases of destination selection and organization of travel and site visits
World and European trends in tourism development	New realities to complement the experiences - VR and AR

The strategy is aimed at creating a consistent image by building a unique identity of the joint cross-border tourist destination. The memory route and the included tourist products and services, coordination and compatibility with other tourist products in the region, focus on the experience - boot camps, team building and paintball games, using the opportunities of the cultural calendars of the two municipalities, as well as the potential for medical tourism in the municipality of Plevna.

At the national level, the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria has developed a [Marketing Mechanism](#) in the field of tourism, which is to be further refined and adapted, if necessary, for individual destinations in the country in partnership with local authorities. The main elements of the national marketing mechanism are consistent with the development of this strategy, and the aim is to be able to effectively use the marketing activities and communication channels that will be provided with national funding.

The main proposed channels for market positioning, which constitute the marketing mix are:

- Participation in international and national specialized events - tourist fairs and accompanying events
- Journalism tours, public and media events
- Inclusion of the tourist destination in national and supranational tourist portals





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- Involvement in the development of joint tourism products in the Balkans
- Inclusion of the tourist destination in thematic materials of the Danube destination, interactive national and transnational tourist products
- Working with tour operators
- Online campaigns
- Participation in presentations of the catalogs of tour operators

#### Modern approaches to tourism marketing, which will be taken into account:

- Providing travel for Bloggers / Vloggers / Influencers to the marketed destination
- Development of a modern looking and functional website
- Ensuring an active presence on social media
- Optimizing the possibilities of online reservations and payment
- Taking advantage of modern search engines / SEO
- Creating mobile applications for the target route / product / service
- Digitization of heritage including VR and AR
- Linking the respective products with the public transport system and defining discounts for certain packages

The specific measures defined in the marketing plan are partly borrowed from the applicable ones set out in the program of the Ministry of Tourism, in view of the possibilities for using the resources provided by the state in presenting the tourist destination. The approach follows and tries to take advantage of the opportunities and initiatives of the Ministry of Tourism to promote the destination in Bulgaria on the [domestic market](#), such as:



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## "Unexpected vacation"

The national "360 degree" campaign "Unexpected Vacation" is traditionally implemented by the Ministry of Tourism. The communication channels used in leading national media are television, radio and online, as well as interactive installations and advertising in the metro. The periods of their holding are in line with the goal of encouraging the trips of Bulgarian tourists in the country outside the active winter and summer seasons.

## Thematic destinations

Development of 8 cultural and historical destinations, which cover 70 settlements. Pleven is included in the route Wealth of the Northwest through Panorama "Pleven Epic" 1877 and Wine Museum - Pleven.

Development of 12 wine and culinary destinations, covering settlements in 50 municipalities, whereas the municipality of Pleven is included through the wine museum.

## Participation in Bulgarian events

Participation in Bulgarian fairs, exhibitions, festivals, congresses, forums, conferences and promotion of tourist destination [Memory Route](#) at a number of sports and other events and events of national and international nature, held in the country and in their advertising campaigns. It is planned to participate in various regional and local sporting competitions, events, festivals, holidays, anniversaries and traditional events in order to stimulate domestic tourism from Bulgaria and Romania. Advertising activities will be carried out within the events.



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## Celebrities and influencers

Promoting the tourist destination through local and national celebrities and influencers creating themed video content, such as athletes, famous actors and other celebrities.

Inclusion of a tourist destination Memory route in the activities of the Ministry of Tourism for promotion of destination Bulgaria on target and promising markets

### [ilovebulgaria](#)

The Ministry of Tourism continues to develop and update the mobile platform iLoveBulgaria for the promotion of the Bulgaria brand and geo-targeted advertising to tourists. The platform contains information in 13 languages about tourist sites and services by areas and interests, helps to find them in real time / place via GPS & QR scanner and creates positive experiences through audio / video guides and game elements. In 2018 and 2019, the tourist sites in the mobile application reached over 1000, the thematic destinations and beaches on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast developed by the Ministry of Tourism were uploaded, as well as 80 videos of tourist sites in the country were shot. The mobile application is fully optimized for easier use by tourists. The ILoveBulgaria and Viber chatbot project offers a wealth of information about interesting places near the destination desired by tourists.

By May 2019, the mobile application has over 25,000 downloads, the site [www.iLoveBulgaria.eu](http://www.iLoveBulgaria.eu) - over 16,000 visitors and the Facebook page - over 100,000 followers.

*An active and up-to-date presence in the platform of the tourist sites as the basis of the joint tourist destination Memory Route is envisaged.*



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## Integrated communication campaigns

Digital advertising - impressions

Direct mailing - sending and distribution of electronic messages representing the destination [Memory Route](#) and related travel services to tour operators, travel agencies

Webinars

[Campaigns with regional and national tour operators](#) - sending e-mails and e-newsletters

[Cooperation with national and international tourism organizations, associations and other structures](#)

[Exhibitions](#) - participation in national and international tourism exhibitions with general and specialized focus. The participation of the Municipality of Plevne as a co-exhibitor of Bulgarian advertising stands of the Ministry of Tourism in the presentation of our country at international tourism exhibitions, with the aim of image presentation of the destination and real support of representatives of the Bulgarian tourism industry.

In view of the limited resources for marketing activities of the products and services of the tourist destination [Memory Route](#), as well as the trends in the marketing of tourist products, the current strategy focuses on conducting online and digital activities.

- [Mainly online advertising and active presence on social media are envisaged.](#)

In a report published in June 2019 by the Bulgarian Association of Communication Agencies, investments in online media increased by nearly 30% on an annual basis in 2018 compared to 2017 and continue to be the only channel with double-digit growth. About 60% of online



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advertising investments in 2018 are made in international online media, networks and platforms - mainly Facebook and Google.

- Digital activities - promotion of the mobile application created within the project, maintaining a representation of tourist sites, products and services on social media - Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, direct B2B and B2C e-mail marketing in harmony with the main digital marketing activities of the national tourist product

Digitalization is transforming the tourism industry at a rapid pace and the Internet is becoming a major channel for organizing tourist travel. Given the trends and attitudes, the Ministry of Tourism has planned in 2020 the promotion of destination Bulgaria in online channels, as digital advertising accompanies each advertising campaign. The main digital activities that will be developed in 2020 are: Digital communication through various formats (pre-roll videos, banners, wallpapers, articles, social media posts, newly created hubs and landing pages, infographics, journalistic videos, etc.) as part of campaigns to promote domestic tourism and inbound tourism. The campaigns will be disseminated in leading world media, in the framework of integrated communication campaigns, in joint campaigns with tour operators, with the participation of events of national and international character, etc .; Programmatic (automated purchase of advertising on the Internet), Google adwords, SEO, display campaign on partner sites, electronic newsletter, advertising on social networks (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter) and Spotify, banners and videos on specialized travel sites, direct B2B and B2C email marketing; Updating and optimization of the functionality of the national tourist portal [www.bulgariatravel.org](http://www.bulgariatravel.org). The goal is for the site to meet the modern market demand and to become one of the main own digital advertising channels; Sustainability and upgrading of the mobile application iLoveBulgaria for promotion



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of the Bulgaria brand through geo-targeted advertising of over 1000 tourist sites, thematic destinations, beaches and others developed by the Ministry of Tourism.

With financial resources, it is envisaged to cooperate more closely and effectively with neighboring and other European tourism structures in order to create and promote common Balkan and other tourism products, thus increasing the share of tourists from distant markets.

13. Additional services that can be provided and determination of target groups - incl. conducting events, trainings, filming, etc.

In view of the considered trends in the field of tourism, as well as the available regional destinations, products and services in the field of tourism, as additional services can be offered:

- virtual tours of the tourist sites included in the destination after digitization of landmarks
- creating opportunities for augmented and virtual reality experiences related to some of the sites, such as the developed 3D mobile platform simulator of participation in the Battle of Plevna as part of the exhibition of Panorama "Plevna Epic"
- periodic film screenings of films with identical military-historical themes
- organizing summer schools for students / weekend workshops
- linking the route and promoting it during traditional concerts and events from the Cultural Calendar of partner municipalities - Laureate Days Katya Popova, International Autumn Jazz Festival, Colorful Rooster Puppet Festival, National Competition for Young Opera Singers Gena Dimitrova, International Guitar Festival and others
- inclusion of wine tastings as part of the Memory Route destination



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- integration of walking tours to present the architecture of cities and known facts from their cultural and historical development
- implementation of joint educational projects with schools
- development of cycling routes as a continuation of route Eurovelo 6 within the partner municipalities - Pleven and Turnu Magurele and subsequent visits to tourist sites or use of services from the destination [The Road of Memory](#)
- development of integrated packages / programs with the developed cross-border tourism products and services and, if possible, integration or presentation of information for mobile applications, as follows: Pilgrims' trip to Bulgaria and Romania - Cross-Border Religious Heritage project; Nature in hand - Natural heritage services related to natural / biological resources; Tourist route Roman border on the territory of the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria; Adventure ballooning; Alternative forms of tourism for visitors 55+ and others available in the cross-border region.

Funding for these additional services can be provided by including them in the project for tourist infrastructure of the Operational Program Regional Development 2014-2020 for providing infrastructure and equipment for their financing, and respectively offering them to generate revenue. Additional funding can be provided through OPRD 2021-2027.

It is important to emphasize the possibility of using integrated positioning with the available regional or thematic destinations and products described above.

Additional funding is possible through the Plan for Integrated Development of the Municipality of Pleven 2021-2027, as well as the Regional Strategy for Development of the Northwest Region for the period 2021-2027, respectively under priority axis 1 and priority axis 2 of OPRD 2021-2027.

The EU Recovery Plan provides additional opportunities for the digitalisation of public services as a measure to address the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic.



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*As the main communication channels and marketing tools will be digital and in view of the limited resources of the municipalities of Plevne and Turnu Magurele to finance this plan, it is appropriate to consider the possibility of a representative of the Plevne Tourist Information Center to acquire additional professional skills to provide some of the activities - such as maintaining pages, direct e-mail marketing, maintaining profiles on social networks, organizing webinars or to use volunteers - young residents of both municipalities with digital skills and knowledge of languages.*

14. Plan for implementation of the strategy - detailed with specific activities included, provision of resources, responsible parties, time period.

The implementation plan is a leading prerequisite for the implementation of the objectives of this Marketing Strategy.

The purpose of the implementation plan is to summarize appropriate measures that specify the defined guidelines for marketing and promotion of the tourist destination **Memory Route** and related tourism products and services based on the analysis of the current situation and development strategy, thus ensuring operational basis for the implementation of the joint strategy.

Important for the implementation of the joint strategy and its strategic goals is the development of tourism services and products within the cross-border joint project Plevne - Turnu Magurele, as well as funding opportunities for measures to promote tourist destinations during the operation of the Strategy.

Another important element for the implementation of the strategy is the institutional framework for its implementation - the organization responsible for the overall management of the marketing of tourism products and services.



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In view of the specifics of each of the stages of implementation of the marketing strategy, the relevant tasks are provided:

## First, starting period - Tasks for product and service development, product management Time period - 2020-2022

### - Task 1 Creating products and services

Within the framework of the current cross-border project, 5 tourist products and 4 tourist services will be developed and provided with infrastructure, which fill the cross-border tourist destination Memory Route with content.

Specifically, at the moment the sites in the cross-border tourist destination are functioning, but they are not branded and promoted as elements of a complete route.

The festival "Memory Route" will be organized and initially held within the project, and is planned to be held annually thereafter.

A trilingual tourist platform that will contain an interactive map showing all the thematic sites and objects of cultural and historical military heritage in the area, accompanied by information about the events/persons they commemorate, interesting stories, legends, GPS coordinates etc. will be established within the project and will function by support from the partner municipalities after the end of the project.

The joint Military History Touristic Fair "Military Memory route" will be organized at the end of the project and annually after the project and will aim to present and promote the created tourist products, among tour operators, hoteliers, cultural institutions, online reservations and tourist platforms / operators, as well as social media promoters.



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It is planned to organize and maintain a permanent exhibition "Military History in Images - Redoubt Grivitsa and Turnu Fortress", which will present a package of relevant images from a historical point of view and from the point of view of historical and military education.

Within the project, a joint club will be established for historical restorations of the events related to the Siege of Pleven. The club will be trained to restore the historical events and will be equipped with authentic gear, weapons, uniforms, pyro effects, etc. The club will continue to function after the end of the project.

Regarding the other 3 tourist services - Organizing team building events, Organizing fitness bootcamps and Paintball, the project does not provide for their pilot implementation, but the strategy for selecting their suppliers / operators should be clarified in order to be able to instruct and train teams, price services and promote accordingly.

- Task 2 Building a framework for management and operation

Structuring a Cross-Border Destination Management Committee is essential to ensure the sustainability of the project and to ensure marketing activities. Fees from visits to individual sites will be generated by the relevant cultural institutions, it should be considered early enough how the infrastructure in Grivitsa Park will work, related to the provision of tourist services - team building, boot camps, paintball games. In order to implement the marketing activities, operators of the respective services must be involved, which will generate revenues from their implementation. The management and operation framework should identify how to involve all stakeholders in the decision-making and financing phases of destination marketing through coordinated action and the identification of strategic partnerships.



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### - Task 3 Pricing of products and services

In order to be able to promote Memory Route as a single tourist destination, after pricing each service and site access fee, a package price should be provided with the corresponding discounts, at least during the starting period. Prices should be compared with the prices of identical services in the region, as well as periodically reviewed and adjusted to market requirements.

As the destination is located in a poorly developed region of Bulgaria and Romania and given the profile of target users, it is assumed that the best pricing strategy is "price penetration" - offering lower prices than most competitors. As no competitors providing identical services are identified in the specific region, it should be taken into account that price is the only element of the marketing mix that is flexible - it can be updated quickly, unlike the other elements. In order to attract visitors and create interest in the destination, products and services, it is important to offer an optimal price-quality ratio with the possibility of a certain type of discounts based on e.g. number of visitors / group of service users, age - students / retirees, visiting the sites of the destination. When promoting the destination, it is good to emphasize the optimal price-quality ratio.

### - Task 4 Conducting the first events

Within the project will be organized and conducted: permanent exhibition "Military History in Images - Redoubt Grivitsa and Turnu Fortress"; Festival "Memory Route"; Pilot event of a joint club for historical reconstructions of events; Military-historical tourist fair "Military memory route", and the trilingual tourist platform, the concept of operators / suppliers of team building, bootcamp and paintball services in Grivitsa Park should all be presented at the tourist fair.



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Determining the time of the events should be identical every year in order to lead to better recognition by consumers, and it is important to be considered of the annual events of the cultural calendar of Plevne and Turnu Magurele, as well as other tourist and cultural events in the region. The aim is to attract visitors who do not fall into the direct target groups, but would be interested in extending their stay in the region and diversify their experiences through the tourism products and services developed in the project.

Program and information about the planned products and services must be distributed annually to tour operators so that they can plan their packages early enough before they are carried out.

- Task 5 Application of elements of digital marketing

Marketing is in constant transformation due to continuous technological progress and new approaches to obtaining information and making decisions for travel and tourism. Many of the activities related to travel, communication and customer relations, sales, etc. are currently carried out online. All digital marketing activities should create a strategic advantage of the targeted tourist destination by inspiring consumers and facilitating their choice by providing well-structured, up-to-date information with a modern presentation.

Within this starting stage it is crucial to implement the main elements of digital marketing to promote the tourist destination and provide up-to-date information that visitors need when choosing a destination and organizing travel and site visits and use of tourist services.

The key is to build a website of the tourist destination Memory Route or a subpage to the page of the Municipality of Plevne or to the Plevne Tourist Information Center. It is recommended to build a standalone page in order to be able to make links and integrations



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with other platforms and online tools, to update the search of the page, as well as to present all other resources such as the trilingual platform.

The route, products and services will be presented on the page, as well as a multimedia presentation of the integrated tourist destination Memory Route.

Young and active citizens can be used as volunteers in the preparation of the multimedia presentation in order to achieve a modern vision and sound.

Links to other platforms, applications and databases of tourism resources in the Cross-Border Region will be presented once partnerships have been established with their operators.

It is good to present the cultural calendar of the two municipalities for the respective year with at least the following information: name and topic of the event, date and place, program and organizers and contact persons.

It is optimal to make profiles of the destination on social media, considered selectively below in the communication plan.

At the same time, basic content needs to be created and updated on social media profiles several times a week. The focus of the update should be new visual content or brief information about new events in the region that may be related to the tourist destination, new trends in this type of tourism, historical facts related to the day and military history, reaction of users of the services when visiting the sites and using the services and other tendencies for maintaining social networks as a tool of digital marketing.

It is good to present up-to-date information about the objects and destination Memory Route at [www.bulgariatravel.org](http://www.bulgariatravel.org) and [www.iLoveBulgaria.eu](http://www.iLoveBulgaria.eu).



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Up-to-date digital content should be provided for the destination of the Ministry of Tourism to update the cultural-historical destination Plevne is included in the route Wealth of the Northwest through Panorama "Plevne Epic" 1877 and Wine Museum - Plevne.

Activities are also planned for direct mailing - building a mailing list with key stakeholders and sending and distributing electronic messages representing the destination Memory Route and related travel services to tour operators, travel agencies in compliance with the Personal Data Protection Act.

- Task 6 Creating partnerships

The key to promoting and establishing a destination The Route of Memory is to build partnerships with local, regional and national, and at a later stage international travel agents and operators. In the initial stage of implementation of the Strategy, tour operators and agents who have experience and interest in working in the region and similar tourism products and services should be identified. Establishing initial contact can be done by invitations to events within the project to save costs for classic tours.

- Task 7 Establishing contacts with journalists and media

Preparation of a list of local, regional and national media to reflect the development of the destination. This should be done in the early stages of implementing the strategy so that they can be invited to the pilot events within the project and thus avoid the cost of promotional events and visits for journalists. Subsequently, the established contacts will be constantly used to maintain information about the destination and products in the relevant media.

- Task 8 Building 2-3 key messages for positioning the tourist destination



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For the identity of the promoted tourist destination Memory Route it is good to create short key messages that reflect the spirit of the destination and each can be used in the promotion of the whole destination and individual tourist products and services. The messages should be focused on the authenticity and attractiveness of the destination, as well as the uniqueness of the experiences.

These messages must be accompanied by a visual identity of the presentation of the destination - colours, font, photos.

The table below shows which of the defined tasks in the current stage of implementation of the Marketing Strategy is applicable to each of the 9 tourism products and services.

**Table 9 Applicability of the individual tasks to each of the 9 tourism products and services**

trilingual tourist platform	x	x	x		x		x	
1 joint military-historical tourist fair "Military memory route"	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
permanent exhibition "Military History in Images - Redoubt Grivitsa and Turnu Fortress"	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
team building events	x	x		x	x	x	x	
fitness bootcamps	x	x	x	x	x	x		



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paintball	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
reenactments on request of historical military events	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

## Second stage - Tasks for occupying a market share of tourist products and services

Time period - 2023-2024

- Task 1 Creating joint regional routes / products

Partnerships should also be established with operators / beneficiaries of projects for tourist destinations / products and services in the Danube Border Region in order to explore the possibility of complementarity of tourist products, common marketing, inclusion in common packages and routes, sharing of destination pages, as well as options for integrating online tools for promotion, booking, payment.

Establishing partnerships with hoteliers, restaurateurs and other providers of related products and services and identifying opportunities for structuring price or other incentives to use joint products and services - package prices, promoting the tourist destination Memory Route.

- Task 2 Organization and holding of accompanying events - games, promotions and prizes on social media

Together with the main stakeholders, games, promotions, raffles and prizes can be organized in the destination profiles on social media, respectively requiring various activities on the part of the participants, adequate to the current development of tourism products and services and the relevant interest they can generate.



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- Task 3 Activation of online presentation of the route and its inclusion in tourist catalogs and SEO optimization

Any presence of a tourist destination Memory Route and related products and services on the Internet must be consistent with search engine marketing. This is usually set in the programming and creation of the content of the official websites of the tourist destination, as well as through paid advertising.

Therefore, it is very important when creating the main text, not just the titles, to have important keywords to easily find the tourist destination, and all sites and portals related to tourism in the region of Plevne - Turnu Magerele. They are different for each type of tourism, but in a text they should always be present with the words "Plevne" and "Turnu Magurele".

Search engines don't just detect text in pages. They also search the address of the pages and this should also be taken into account.

A mobile version of the site is required because Google imposes "penalties" if a page is searched through a mobile browser and there is no mobile version. The search engine thus places the page at the further down in the search results.

- Task 4 Realization of selective offline advertising

This advertising is limited to actions that represent an investment opportunity, and the expected return is higher than in online media. As far as public transport is operated by a municipal enterprise, it is possible to consider the possibility of advertising on public transport vehicles, bus stops, ticket machines or use other planned elements of the urban side - benches, bins. In the final stage of the project it is good to consider organizing a flash



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mob on the territories of the two partner municipalities in order to promote the cross-border destination.

- Task 5 Participation in national and regional tourism fairs and exhibitions and other events

Currently, the Municipality of Plevna and the Municipality of Tarnu Magurele, respectively, are not actively represented at national and cross-border tourism fairs and exhibitions and other related events.

The approach set out in this Strategy is to maximize the potential for the presentation of national and cross-border tourist destinations and products by the relevant ministries, as described in the previous part of this Strategy. However, at this second stage of implementation of the Strategy it is good to implement actions for independent targeted presentation of the tourist destination Memory Route at thematically selected fairs and exhibitions in both countries and with international coverage.

In order to assess whether the participation in these forums continues, it is necessary to examine the effectiveness of each of the participations in order to focus efforts on specific fairs and exhibitions with the best effect.

The most important thing for the participation of tourist fairs is to be thematic, ie. to choose tourist exchanges by types of tourism, ie exchanges in the field of cultural and historical tourism.

Annual Congresses, festivals and others

The specialized annual congresses of the various world associations are a good and not very expensive channel for communication in the cross-border region as a tourist destination.



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These are congresses of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and others, which can be a great platform for positioning the Pleven - Turnu Magurele region as a destination for cultural tourism.

Congresses and conferences of major tourism associations - tour operators, travel agents, etc. are extremely important for advertising the tourist destination.

- Task 6 Promoting the destination through celebrities

Promoting the tourist destination through local and national celebrities and influencers, creating thematic visual content published in their accounts and in the account of the destination Memory Route on social media.

The table below shows which of the defined tasks in the current stage of implementation of the Marketing Strategy is applicable to each of the 9 tourism products and services.

**Table 10 Applicability of the individual tasks to each of the 9 tourism products and services**

	31	32	33	34	35	36
thematic cross-border tourist destination "Memory Route"	x	x	x	x	x	x
one-day festival "Memory Route"	x	x				x



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trilingual tourist platform				x		
1 joint military-historical tourist fair "Military memory Route"	x	x				x
permanent exhibition "Military History in Images - Redoubt Grivitsa and Turnu Fortress"	x					x
team building events	x				x	x
fitness bootcamps	x				x	x
paintball	x	x			x	x
reenactments on request of historical military events	x					x

### Third stage - Tasks at upward trend of visitors

#### Time period - 2025-2027

- Task 1 Maintenance of elements of digital marketing

As digital marketing as well as trends in tourism change dynamically, it is essential to monitor relevant trends and update relevant approaches and measures.

- Task 2 Sustainable holding of the festival and renewal of the supporting events to the permanent exhibition and the reenactments, connection with other regional festivals



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As the period is included in the period of sustainability of the project, the festival, fair and other accompanying events will be held annually. It is good to take into account the trends in the development of tourism and its marketing, as well as the short-term development of the tourist destination, the change in the preferences of target groups and markets, so that the formats can be adapted to current interests of the audience.

- Task 3 Creating and implementing a model for using stakeholders as ambassadors of a tourist destination Memory Route

Journalists, representatives of higher and secondary education institutions, diplomatic missions of foreign target market countries, accredited in our country, hoteliers, restaurateurs, tour operators and travel agents are some of the most important channels of influence on the end user. This model is based mainly on PR actions and the use of these stakeholders as ambassadors of the destination.

In order for this model to be effective, it must have a plan that takes into account at least the following structure:

- Choosing of an ambassador of the destination for the specified year by type of tourism
- Selection of target market for the respective year by types of tourism (one target market per year for a certain type of tourism)
- Choice of events to advertise the tourist destination Memory Route
- Choice of tour operators, hotels and restaurants, as well as transport companies as the main service providers and as the main advertisers

- Task 4 Contracts with foreign travel agencies



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With the effective implementation of the previous measures of the Strategy, especially the participation in fairs and exhibitions and effective digital marketing, there will be prerequisites for the implementation of partnerships with foreign travel agencies. For this purpose, it is good to hold special B2B events, which could be remote, online to present the destination and negotiate certain parameters of cooperation. A successful model would be for all operators of tourism products and services in the region to create several different regional packages for different target markets and groups and thus negotiate with foreign agencies by presenting diversified services and products.

- Task 5 Digitization of some of the expositions of the sites, creation and operation of an interactive portal
- Task 6 Creating Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality - e.g. virtual walks in 3D reconstructions, and / or use of wearable devices for the realization of the tourist offerings of tourist places and tourist sites

The last two measures are set for the third stage of the Strategy for two reasons: they require significant resources and time for their implementation, and such programs for digitalization, including cultural and historical heritage will be available in the program period 2021-2027. In the period under review, this will be a mandatory element for presentation, experience of the tourist destination.

This type of activities will allow additional service provided on site at the respective sites, increasing the added value of the tourist product and will be particularly attractive among students, youth, families with children. At the same time, it will allow remote experience of some of the products - exhibitions, site viewings and will generate revenue from this.



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In addition, it will be possible to create attractive demotours aimed at international tour operators and agents to attract their attention to a sustainable partnership, and will be used to promote the destination Memory Route at international exhibitions and fairs.

The table below shows which of the defined tasks in the current stage of implementation of the Marketing Strategy is applicable to each of the 9 tourism products and services.

**Table 11 Applicability of the individual tasks to each of the 9 tourism products and services**

	31	32	33	34	35	36
thematic cross-border tourist destination "Memory Route"	x		x	x	x	x
one-day festival "Memory Route"	x	x	x			
trilingual tourist platform	x					
1 joint military-historical tourist fair "Military memory Route"	x	x	x			



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permanent exhibition "Military History in Images - Redoubt Grivitsa and Turnu Fortress"	x	x	x			
team building events	x	x	x	x		
fitness bootcamps	x	x	x	x		
paintball	x	x	x	x		
reenactments on request of historical military events	x	x	x			

15. Communication plan - communication goals, target groups, channels, products, financial resources and time frame

The present plan is part of the overall Plan for the implementation of the strategy, in accordance with the need for specific communication of the developed cultural and historical products and the accompanying tourist services.

In the first place, the communication process is defined as the "exchange of knowledge about heritage" - an expression of the common European responsibility for its preservation for future generations. The thesis is that in the globalizing market, the average person feels the need to discover, touch and try to reach their roots, as well as consciously discover the life-determining cultural environment of others. This is not a one-way desire to gain factual knowledge, but to experience the unique identity of people as communication agents, and cultural values that reflect to varying degrees their own history and heritage. As a subject of



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communication, heritage itself materializes a more open and rich dialogue and more intensive cross-border cultural cooperation through interaction.

Secondly, the communication is carried out through the channels for distribution of tourist products and services. The right choice of distribution channels guarantee the successful positioning of products and services in the tourism market. The distribution of the product must contribute to its recognition and establishing on the national, regional and international levels.

Therefore, it is envisaged that the communication will be realized through two main types of communication channels: informational and distribution. Prerequisites for the successful implementation of the communication plan are:

- The information used by the various stakeholders should be consistent with the reliability of the historical facts about the sites included in the route and with the overall presentation of the destination;
- Regular presence in the online space (sites, social networks, etc.);
- Creating an effective partnership with the branch organizations in tourism, tour operators, Tourist information centers, scientific units, etc., having the potential for realization of the communication measures.

Dissemination is an important component of the marketing strategy and includes specific activities whose ultimate goal is to selectively create sales networks that provide the best conditions for direct or through intermediaries (e.g. travel agents) distribution of travel



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products and services.

The proposed measures to facilitate the dissemination of tourism products and services include the creation of the necessary infrastructure for communication purposes; establishing partnerships with travel agencies and incoming tour operators and, on the other hand, stimulating individual tourism by introducing a subscription / pass.

The communication strategy will be implemented in compliance with the following basic principles:

- Equality - ensuring equal access to information for all stakeholders and all types of tourists.
- Timeliness - planning and implementation in order to meet the identified needs of the target groups in a timely manner.
- Adaptability - taking into account the specific features of both the target groups and the specific situation in which they are performed.
- Partnership - open dialogue and interaction with all stakeholders

The choice of communication means and activities in the implementation of the communication strategy is consistent with:

- The specifics of the message or messages;
- The characteristics of the target group or subgroup of tourists - recipient of the message - such as size, communication channels to reach it;



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- Possible activities and forms for communication;
- When communicating messages that affect a range of different target groups and subgroups, an integrated communication mix will be used to ensure the effectiveness of communication, both as activities and forms and as channels.

PR communication and events in order to promote joint tourism products and services, including:

- Participation in international and national conferences, congresses, B2B forums, discussion panels, round tables and other activities with representatives of state and local authorities, regional tourism structures and industry organizations and other stakeholders, including on a project basis and with donor funding.
- Hosting, participation and organization of public, media and business events and obtaining maximum media and PR effect (competitive sports events, competitions, hosting, conferences, initiatives, festivals, etc.)
- Regular thematic press releases, articles, journalistic videos and comprehensive PR communication in regional and, if possible, national media in target and promising markets, as well as in our country as part of upcoming communication campaigns.
- Sightseeing trips - if possible as part of the educational and expeditionary tours organized by the Ministry of Tourism for media representatives, bloggers, vloggers, influencers, film crews, tour operators, travel agents, as part of upcoming communication campaigns and cooperation as part of foreign visits.
- Online communication - Online is the most effective communication channel, both when planning organized and individual visits, with or without the assistance of a tour operator / agent, and when choosing a tourist destination. The mobile application



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developed under the project should be regularly used as an effective communication channel by maintaining up-to-date information for the development of the sites, for upcoming events from the general cultural calendar, etc. It is necessary to create a site of the joint tourist destination, which will be included in Internet portals for tourism, which will ensure reaching a large number of potential tourists. The information on the website should be supplemented by social media channels, which include:

- Twitter is used to send a message of up to 140 characters, which may relate to cultural events, new exhibits, completed projects, changes in the program to visit and more. It is recommended that the message be accompanied by a link to a web page providing more details about the subject of the message in the form of written or graphic content.
- Facebook is the No. 1 social media platform in the world, with over one billion members. Although Facebook was originally created as a socialization channel, it has subsequently become, through added features, a space to promote products / services, companies / organizations and even travel destinations. Facebook offers specific marketing tools such as Facebook marketing, Facebook advertising, Facebook business, Facebook studio and Facebook studio cloud. Facebook allows users (e.g. visitors to the sites of the joint tourist destination) to give some notes, depending on the satisfaction of their visit. This helps tour operators and destination management organizations to get a real idea of the degree of attractiveness of the tourist product and whether it meets the needs of the target group.
- Google Plus - this is the network of users of gmail.com, googleplay.com, panoramio.com, etc. and the Google search engine. In total, Google Plus has over 300 million members. A profile of the tourist destination Memory Route should be created, with photo albums to



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duplicate those in panoramio.com. It is very important that the titles of the photos are in Bulgarian and English, as well as their descriptions. It is very important not to upload photos without a title and description, but if they are sites to visit: with working hours, address, telephone and GPS coordinates.

- YouTube is an excellent opportunity to increase the visibility of the tourist product on the Romanian-Bulgarian Roman border by publishing promotional videos or even documentaries. This is a free advertising tool that has the potential to attract a large number of Internet users in a relatively short period of time.
- Travel blogs that have a growing impact on the consumption of travel services. By recounting their own travels, bloggers communicate with potential users of tourism and heritage in an empathetic, personal and reliable way. They create relationships of trust with tourists that advertising agencies do not have access to in the context of their association with the corporate environment, aimed at profit and not at creating social value.

Specialized foreign or international websites

- Tripadvisor.com
- Lonelyplanet.com
- WikiTravel.org
- Fodors.com

All four sites have departments for information on hotels, restaurants and accommodation, as well as departments for general information of the respective destination, as well as by types



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of attractions and activities. It is very important to standardize this information, as well as to update it constantly.

### Professional Internet portals and networks

- LinkedIn.com - It should be registered as Tourist Information Centre - Plevne, as well as contact the representatives of the interested parties. Subsequently, Tourist Information Centre Plevne through their membership in groups of tour operators, museums, etc., will be able to advertise the tourist destination Memory Route.
- Travelmole.com - information about the tourist destination Memory Route is submitted, as it is one of the most visited portals for professionals in the tourism industry.
- Eventbrite.com - portal for organizing events and selling tickets without the need for eventim.bg, ticketmaster.com, etc. Very useful for organizing small events and promoting them.

### Distribution communication channels

#### Tour operators and travel agents

The tourist operators, travel agents, travel agencies, tour guides, etc. have a strong influence on the tourist market. The interest of tour operators is focused on expanding the opportunities for the formation of competitive packages, providing information on individual resources and services, and advertising the tourist area; expanding the circle of potential users of tourist packages by promoting tourism opportunities, respectively provoking interest in travelling to the region.



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Travel agents with their role of intermediaries can satisfy their need for information, respectively a wider range of services (accommodation, additional services) and packages from the region, and on the basis of advertising the tourist product to have an extended range of users, motivated to travel. Special attention should be paid to cruise operators.

Their use as a distribution channel is important for the positioning and successful development of the destination of the market niches established by them and the offering of the product will accelerate its entry into the tourist market. Therefore, it is especially important to promote tourism products and services to the representatives of the tourism business at the national, regional and international levels and to carry out regular communication with them.

### Tourist Information Centre

Tourist Information Centre Plevne has a main function for information services to tourists and a role in generating long-term benefits in terms of the image of the tourist product (through general promotion, ensuring consistency of values that determine the image) and in surveying tourist satisfaction. The Tourist Information Centre can be the main structure that carries out information and communication activities, part of the current strategy.

For the implementation of an effective communication campaign, the information security of the route is important in order to attract tourists. The information about the route and the sites needs to be provided to the representatives of business, tour operators, non-governmental organizations in order to be used in their work. In order to form a positive attitude towards the tourist destination and the accompanying products and services, it is important to carry out current information supply and update of the created mobile application.



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A significant focus of the development of distribution channels for tourism products and services is the use of distribution opportunities to disseminate information about them by integrating them into the supply of tour operators and cruise operators.

Creating partnerships for the implementation of joint initiatives / projects aimed at education, protection of cultural heritage, economic incentives can contribute to communicating the product to internal and external audiences. In working with stakeholders, it is important to organize discussion events (round tables, focus groups, etc.) for the development of the route, given the long period of implementation of the strategy.

### Financial framework

The activities defined in this Strategy are in compliance with the Tourism Act (TA), Art. 10 and 16, as well as with the Law on Local Government and Local Administration (LLGLA), Art. 17 and Art. 51, and the Cultural Heritage Act (CHA), Article 112, paragraph 44, para. 4, 6 and 10, Article 117.

According to the TA, activities to be financed related to tourism on the territory of the Municipality are:

Art. 10, para. 2.

1. Construction and maintenance of the infrastructure serving tourism on the territory of the municipality, including the local roads connecting the resorts with airports, railway stations and bus stations, as well as with cultural sites;
2. Preservation, maintenance and development of green areas;
3. Construction of tourist information centres and organization of tourist information services;



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4. Advertising in the country and abroad of the tourist sites located on the territory of the municipality.

As can be seen, the TA does not provide for some of the vital activities provided for in this Strategy, namely:

- Providing marketing and information services, including new technologies, to the tourist destination / product
- Training of the human resources of the municipalities, which are connected to the information service of the tourists and coordination of the activities for promoting the tourist potential of the municipality.

On the other hand, again according to the TA these activities are financed by:

Art. 16, para. 2 The funds for the development of tourism in the municipality shall be raised by a decision of the municipal council from:

1. The tourist tax, determined by the order of the Law for the local taxes and fees;
2. The fines and property sanctions imposed by the mayor of the municipality under this law;
3. Fees for categorization of tourist sites under Art. 55, para. 4;
4. Funds provided for the implementation of targeted programs and projects;
5. Donations and grants, funds under international programs and agreements, when they are not intended to go to the state budget;
6. Interest;



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## 7. Others.

The funds under para. 2 shall be spent only for the activities under art. 10, para. 2.

Legislation stipulates that all funds for tourism, including infrastructure, road projects, restoration of buildings, etc. are financed from 2 reliable sources: tourist tax and categorization fees. Funds provided under international programs and agreements, fines imposed, donations and grants, funds provided for the implementation of targeted programs and projects depend on many factors that are unpredictable and therefore cannot be planned. It is common practice for investments for sites with tourist potential to be provided by external programs and projects, as the budgets of the municipality are limited. A concrete example is the current cross-border project. The problem with this type of financing is that the tourist infrastructure and potential is developed asynchronously and integrated, on a project basis, maintained within the 5-year period of project sustainability and then subside. In principle, what remains to be financed from the tourist tax and categorization fees are the activities for the maintenance of Tourist Information Centres and information services for tourists.

In order for the current Marketing Strategy to be implemented, on the one hand, the funding of activities directly related to tourism must be increased, as provided by the TA, as well as active involvement of the business that will operate some of the tourism services included in the project - paintball, boot camps and military team building. This can be done by changing the activities financed by the Municipal Council, which under the TA decides how to raise funds to finance activities related to tourism, as well as by selecting infrastructure operators in Grivitsa Park to provide related tourist services in destination Memory Route.



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**Table 12 Types of sources of financing**

Types of sources of financing of the Marketing Strategy and related activities for the improvement of the tourist infrastructure	
Internal	External
Revenues from tourist tax	Target programs of the European Community and related approved projects - for regional development, for ecology, for innovation and competitiveness, for human resources development, for culture and others.
Revenues from fees for “categorization” activity	Target programs of the European Economic Area (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein), abbreviated as the Norwegian program
Revenues from the sale of souvenirs and information materials in the Tourist Information Centres	Donations and grants and funds for programs and projects that are not intended to go to the national budget
Fines and property sanctions imposed by the mayor of the municipality on enterprises related to tourism	Other types of funding
Interest on unspent funds for tourism	



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The current amounts related to the financing of tourism in Pleven, as well as Turnu Magurele are insufficient and are mainly related to projects to improve the condition and build new tourist attractions. In this regard, work should be done to secure external sources of funding, such as:

### Informal partnerships

Informal partnerships are those that exist between the municipalities and Tourist Information Centre Pleven, on the one hand, and local tour operators, restaurants, transport companies, media, universities, and all other organizations that create, operate and promote tourism assets in the Pleven and Turnu Muggle municipalities. These partnerships are not required by law, and in most cases, are not regulated by long-term contracts and concessions, but are of great importance in ensuring activities to promote the cross-border region as a tourist destination. This can be directly - by participating in the means of creating and maintaining digital marketing tools and indirectly - by providing free advertising space or distribution of advertising materials, providing hotel, restaurant and transport services, inclusion in catalogs and brochures, Internet sites etc.

The Municipality of Pleven should increase and try to formalize these types of partnerships for the purpose of not only advertising, but also research of tourism, creation of a tourist product and training of human resources. Research in tourism, as well as the creation of a tourism product, can be linked to university programs, and thus indirectly fund activities that are usually outsourced.

### Sponsorships

The partner municipalities should focus on sponsorship for the financing of promotional



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activities to local companies, institutions and NGOs.

## Volunteering and club practices

Volunteering is seen as a type of funding because it can save municipalities the money they need to market a cross-border destination, the Memory Route. This applies mainly to information services in tourism, such as the development of Plevne - Turnu Magurele Free Tour; digital marketing - maintaining profiles on social networks, participation in various activities such as flash mobs.

Club practices are very common in developed countries in tourism marketing. Paid or unpaid membership in clubs for friends of the destination or friends of culture, museums in cities, museums provide a natural environment for research and advertising in the field of all types of tourism. These are associations and other informal groups.

With the development of social networks, these interest clubs (formal or informal groups) indirectly fund tourism advertising using the free time of group members.

Therefore, the "club" principle should be used to the maximum in order to reduce the obligations of municipalities to finance promotional and advertising activities.

## 16. Monitoring system

The monitoring is carried out in order to monitor the progress in the implementation of the system of objectives and specific activities to achieve the vision of the Strategy.

The monitoring process is:

- Review of the appropriateness of the planned measures;
- Analysis of their implementation, as well as the reasons for deviation, if any;



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- Providing preventive measures at critical points carrying risks;
- Evaluate implementation and, if necessary, identify and take corrective action.

The management, monitoring and updating process will be carried out by the Cross-Border Strategy Management Committee. Representatives of the operational teams of the Municipality of Plevne and the Municipality of Turnu Magurele will have responsibilities for exercising the functions related to the implementation of the Marketing Strategy, and they will be determined in particular within the first stage of the Strategy, detailing the institutional framework for its implementation.

The monitoring of the current strategy is an important element, as the sector is dynamically developing and changes in the socio-economic environment have the potential to seriously affect the marketing and marketing of developed tourism products and services. Therefore, it is good that the process of monitoring the implementation of the strategy is carried out annually so that, if necessary, adequate corrective action can be taken.

The update mechanism is an important condition for the adaptation of specific measures and activities, in case of need, imposed by changes. An update is a consequence of the measures taken to monitor the system.

The update covers significant changes that do not contradict the vision and goals.

The main factors requiring an update of the Strategy are:

- changes in the economic and social conditions in the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region;
- updating of strategic documents at national, regional and European level;
- changes in related national or EU legislation;
- changes in sectoral strategies and programs affecting the implementation of the Strategy;
- implementation of related activities that may affect the marketing and offering of



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developed tourism products and services.

The initiative to update the strategy is the responsibility of the Cross-Border Strategy Management Committee.



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