

State-of-art Alternative Tourism in Bulgaria

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On-line | 02/072020

Euroregion Pleven-Olt Association is a non-governmental organization, established in 2007. Its founders are the mayors of municipalities from Pleven District, Bulgaria and Olt County, Romania.

The Association has implemented projects within cross-border and transnational programmes, supporting the social-economic development of the region.





RAMSAT
Interreg Europe



111 000 sq.km.
7 million population



EUROREGION PLEVEN - OLT

People employed in the fields of tourism make up 56% of the state workforce. Tourism is one of the main sectors, which forms 12-13% of GDP of the country (according to the statistics data for 2019). Bulgaria is a small in area country, but with exceptional natural and cultural resources for the development of tourism in all of its forms.





Eco tourism:



Established network of 3 national parks, 11 natural parks, 89 reserves, over 2 200 natural landmarks and more than 37 000 km of marked eco-trails.

Bulgaria is the first European country which in 1995 developed and adopted its own national strategy for biodiversity conservation.

Usually the local ecotourism service providers are small enterprises.

The main funding mechanism is Rural Development Programme.

The main approach supporting the ecotourism products and marketing quality is the certification.

In recent years there has been an increase in the interest to ecotourism products as a specific segment of the internal market.



Adventure tourism:



Bulgaria is rich with destinations for extreme adventures:

- for bungee jumping, rafting, kayaking, paragliding, rock climbing, caving, diving, hunting and fishing, etc.

For 2015, Bulgaria was ranked as the third among the developing countries in this type of tourism.

There are specialized agencies and clubs for adventure tourism such as "Adventure Gusto", "Adventure BG" , etc.

Despite the various opportunities for adventure tourism, the virtual map of tourist sites and landmarks developed by the Official Tourism Portal of Bulgaria does not show any destination for adventure tourism in Bulgaria. Only a few caves are marked on it.

If you are looking for new adventures, if the sports occupy an important part of your daily life, if your vacation is related to movement, conquering high peaks and new territories, apparently you will find Bulgaria extremely attractive.



Rural tourism:



Rural tourism is the fastest growing in our country. In the last 4-5 years the growth of the rural tourism is about 15% per year.

The growth in the rural tourism remains sustainable mainly due to the richness of natural, architectural and historical landmarks, as well as due to the additionally offered services in the fields of active recreation.

Rural tourism is the best way to get to know the traditions in Bulgaria.

Each of the visitors can immerse themselves in the rural life and try different specialties of traditional Bulgarian cuisine. Usually the tourists are welcomed in authentic houses built in the 19th or 20th century, and part of the experience is the food prepared by the hosts.

The virtual map of tourist sites and landmarks developed by the Official Tourism Portal of Bulgaria again does not show any destination for rural tourism in Bulgaria.

It is hard for Bulgarian tour operators to sell packages for rural tourism in our country. Mostly foreigners are interested in it. Bulgarian tourist organizes his trip by himself.

On average, about 80% of the tourists in the villages are Bulgarians, and in recent years there has been an increase in guests from Romania, Russia, Germany and France.



Cultural tourism:



As a country with a thousand-year history and a legacy left from ancient civilizations, Bulgaria has something to offer to its own guests who are interested in history, culture, ethnography, religion, architecture and art.

Interesting historical sites have been preserved even in the most remote and mountainous villages. Some of them are popular, others are yet to reach their full potential.

In the rural areas are situated unique museums such as the Beans Museum in the village of Smilyan, the Yogurt Museum in the village of Studen Izvor.

Bulgaria also has an extremely rich folklore calendar. It includes many traditions and customs through which the tourist can touch the Bulgarian way of life and culture.

In the country there are many opportunities for exploring the traditional economic activities in our lands - production of rose oil, wine, etc.

The virtual map of tourist places and landmarks, developed by the Official Tourism Portal of Bulgaria, shows mostly destinations for cultural tourism in Bulgaria.



Why do we participate in RAMSAT project?

- We are looking for partnerships with public and private sectors abroad;
- Exchange of good practices – their learning, adaptation, and development in projects and their implementation;

The projects will be related to the development of cultural tourism and alternative forms of tourism, renovation of cultural monuments and development of tourist products, protection of tourist attractions related to the natural environment and providing services with cognitive or educational purpose, etc.

The experience of the development of cultural tourism following OP "Regional Development" shows that projects based on cultural objects of world and national importance are financially viable and have a great potential for returning the investments if the activities on the restoration and conservation are combined with activities on advertisement and development of the cultural object as a tourist attraction.

Projects will be targeted at municipalities of the 4th hierarchical level, i.e. Nikopol, Troyan, Mezdra, Cherven Bryag, on the territory of which there are monuments of national and world significance, but their potential for development of tourism is not being used.

In all of them will be implemented and adapted appropriate good practices learned during the implementation of RAMSAT.



Potential for sustainable alternative tourism

The remote and mountainous areas in Bulgaria have great potential for development of Sustainable tourism by preserving and exhibiting natural and cultural heritage and promoting continuity in relation to living heritage and traditions. The potential is not fully exploited due to the weak development of regional tourism products, underdeveloped public-private partnerships, poor tourist infrastructure and accessibility of part of the territories, underdeveloped attractions and lack of trained and qualified staff.

Generally, tourism is among the priorities of national and regional policy in Bulgaria. From it is expected a tangible contribution to achieve balanced and sustainable development of Bulgarian municipalities and regions. The tourism development in the remote, border and mountainous municipalities with unique tourist resources, should be linked to national and European tourist routes and with developed tourist areas in order to gain the chance for adequate exposure and promotion of values in small municipalities. In particular, near the village of Gigen lies the ancient city Ulpia Eskus, which is of national importance, but is not included in tourist routes and does not use its potential for economic development in the region. And there are many more examples.

In this respect, RAMSAT will contribute to the implementation of the strategic objective of stimulating regional development and reducing regional disparities.

The geographical location of our country, the diverse relief, the temperate climate, the unique cultural and historical landmarks and preserved cultural practices, the built tourist base, the proximity of the tourist sites, as well as the presence of still stored and preserved territories in ecologically clean regions, the university specialties Eco-tourism and Alternative tourism are a prerequisite for increasingly successful development of Bulgaria in offering alternative tourism.





Mission of BAAT:

We strive for sustainable development and increasing the quality of the tourist product and infrastructure and actively support any initiative in this field.

We want to make Bulgaria a significant and intriguing destination for alternative tourism by paying special attention to its human resources and nature.

We encourage the development of partnerships in order to make Bulgaria a better place to live and do business together.



Thank you for attention!



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