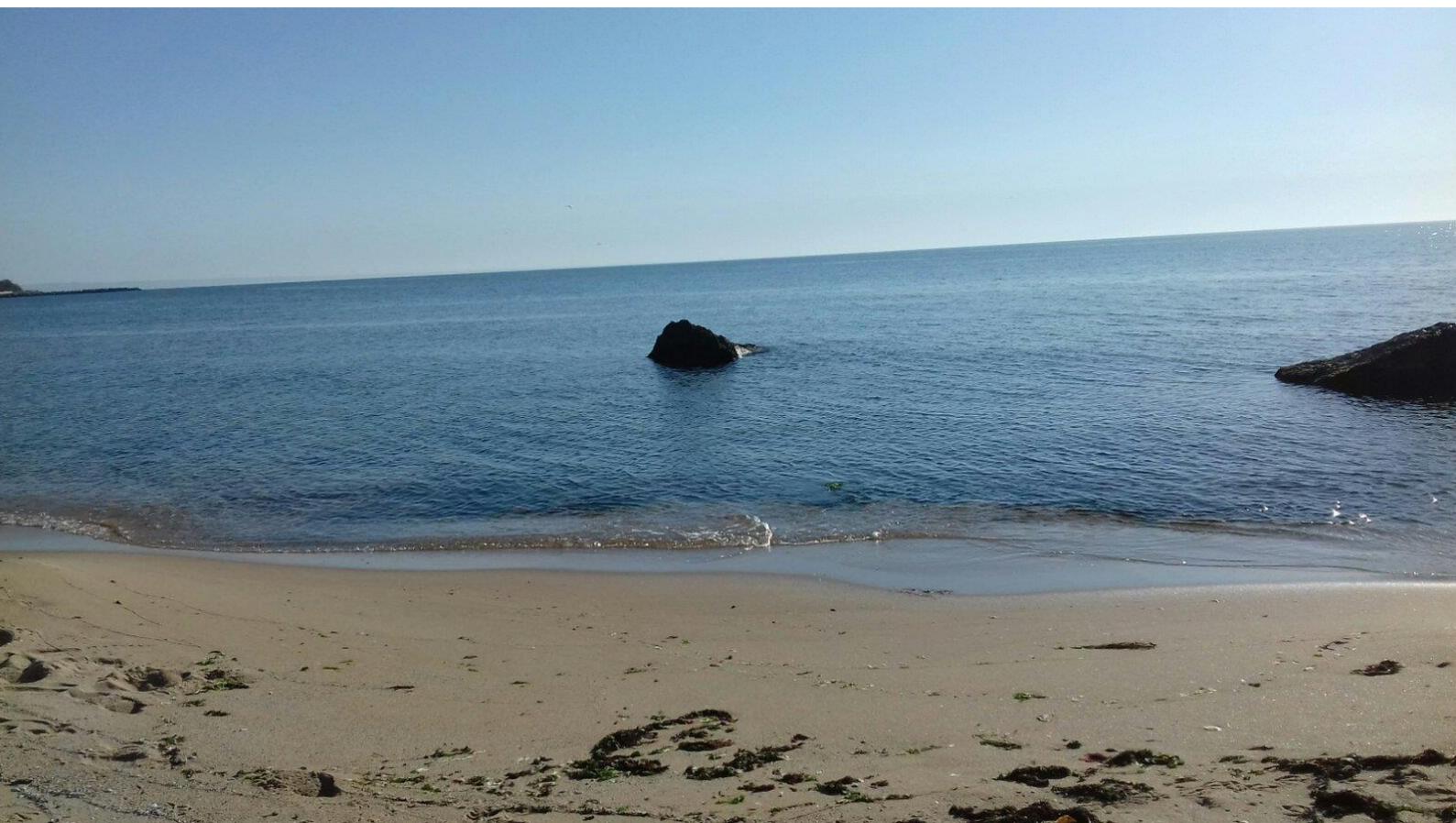




Common borders. Common solutions.



Research of the tourist potential in the Black Sea Region  
Bulgaria

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

During the development of the present survey the following information sources and documents have been referred:

### International documents

1. Europe 2020 Strategy
2. The Seoul Declaration on Peace and Tourism
3. The Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism
4. The Charter for Sustainable Tourism
5. The Global Code of ethics for tourism /UNWTO/

### Laws and regulations

1. Spatial Planning Act
2. Regional Development Act
3. Tourism Act
4. Act on the Black Sea Coast Spatial Development
5. Concession Act
6. Act on waters
7. Fisheries and Aquaculture Act
8. Environmental Protection Act
9. Protected Areas Act
10. Waste Management Act
11. Clear Ambient Air Act
12. Culture Heritage Act
13. Culture Protection and Development Act
14. Health Act

## 2. Green and Historic Tourism trends in Bulgaria

### 1.1. Marine Strategy of Republic of Bulgaria

#### Europe 2020 Strategy targeted to the Bulgarian Black Sea coast

The Strategy stipulates the blue growth - to improve sustainable growth in the marine sector, maritime transport and tourism. The EC strategic framework for 2014-2020 is for an integrated EU maritime policy and the Black Sea Synergy - which is indeed a new regional cooperation initiative.

The national program includes development strategies of the Northeast Planning Region, the Southeast Planning Region, the administrative regions of Burgas, Varna and Dobrich.

### Sectoral strategies for tourism development

### 1.2. The Black Sea region in Bulgaria

#### National Strategy for sustainable tourism development in Bulgaria /2014-2030/

The Black Sea region of Bulgaria covers a total area of 16287,3 sq.km which is 14,58% of the country territory (the territory of Dobrich region is 4 719,7 sq.km - 4.24% of the country, Burgas region - 7748,1 sq.km - 6.9% of the whole territory, Varna region - 3819.5 sq.km or 3.44% of the country territory). The population is 1 79 838 people which is 14,8% of the country population distributed accordingly in Dobrich region - 189 677 people (2.6% of the country population), in Varna - 474 344 people or 6.5%, in Burgas - 415 817 people or 5.7%).

The region borders Republic of Romania to the North and Republic of Turkey to the South.

These common borders, among which one is with a EU member state provides good opportunities for strengthening the transport and communication operations in the region, its internal connectivity and cross-border cooperation.

Flat, mostly lowland and flat-hilly relief prevails in the region, which in combination with the soil conditions, favors the development of agriculture in its Northern and Southern part. The mountainous terrain in the Southern part does not influence the inland connectivity and on the transport connections with Turkey. There are agricultural lands and forest territories in the area

The largest share of the agricultural areas belongs to Dobrich district, and the forest territories - to Burgas district.

### 1.2.1. Climate

The climate in the region varies from moderate to typically Mediterranean in its Southern parts. In the Northern and Central parts the number of rivers and the level of rainfall is low due to the flat terrain, while in its Southern parts, the river network is highly developed and the level of rainfall is significant. Nevertheless, it is a region with low water runoff effect given the presence of large coastal lakes and estuaries - Durankulak Lake, Varna Lake, Beloslav Lake, Burgas Lake.

In the summer there are droughts and drying of the rivers in the region, except for its southern part, where there is significant groundwater replenishment.

Global climate change will undoubtedly have an impact in the region especially on agriculture, tourism, water management and forestry.

The World Wildlife Fund models for climate change show more frequent changes in wind and wave patterns, leading to extreme weather events and an increasing number of storms in the Black Sea. There are also changes on the sea beaches on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. The area of the beaches is significantly reduced. Climate change will lead to a change in the amount and characteristics of precipitation in the region to more torrential and seasonal appearance.

Despite these changes, we can talk about the specificity of the Black Sea region and its difference from the countryland even in terms of climate.

### 1.2.2. Seismicity and landslide processes

The intensity of seismicity in the region starts from VII degrees in its southern and central parts to IX degrees in its northern part.

Landslide and erosion processes mostly occur in the northeastern part of the region. The town of Balchik was built on a landslide, due to which most of the buildings have cracked and collapsed.

### 1.2.3. Transport and connectivity

The inland connectivity of the region is performed through the two highways Hemus /North/ and Trakia /south/, and the section Varna - Bourgas is realized through the first class road (international) road I-9. A second-class road network is available. The Black Sea highway is in a process of planning, which will connect the two major centers of Varna and Bourgas. The Black Sea cities Varna, Burgas and Pomorie have a railway connection, as the railway line to Pomorie is used only for freight transport.

There are two large ports of national importance on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast - Varna port and Bourgas port. Regular ferry lines: Varna-Ilichovsk-Varna, Varna-Ilichovsk-Poti/Batumi-Ilichovsk-Varna and Bourgas-Poti-Novorossiysk-Bourgas are maintained.

The international airports Varna Airport and Bourgas Airport, concessioned by Fraport, are the main centers of air connections with the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. Smaller airports exist as private ones near Balchik and Primorsko. The Black Sea is not fully used for the inland connectivity of the region, despite the presence of large ports - Varna, Bourgas as well as smaller ones - Nessebar, Balchik, Sozopol, Tsarevo.

The main reasons for the insufficient use of maritime transport, road and rail transport are related with the the existing registration and license terms for the port activities and the lack of free public access to ports.

Positive steps in this direction have been undertaken through the construction of the intermodal terminals Burgas and Varna and the public access zones.

#### 1.2.4. Energy corridors

Two international energy corridors currently pass through the Black Sea - the Blue Stream and Turkish Stream pipelines transporting natural gas from Russia to Turkey.

#### 1.2.5. Tourism - culture, natural phenomenon, historical heritage

There are many protected areas in the region among which is the largest natural park in the country called Strandzha, with an area of 116 136 hectares.

Via pontica migration route passes through the region - it is the route of waterfowl, songbirds, etc.

The variety of protected natural areas in the region provides significant potential for the development of cognitive, ecotourism and other forms of alternative tourism. The largest botanical garden in the country and architectural reserve - Brashlyan are located in Balchik.

Given the availability of ancient settlements in the coast, the region has a significant cultural potential: the presence of the oldest civilization in the world with processed gold from Varna necropolis, Thracian megalithic cult consecrations, ancient cities, cultural and historical values, national shrines as Petrova niva, reveal the potential for cultural and historical tourism.

European traces of civilization from different eras are found in region. The ancient Nessebar, included in the UNESCO List and two other sites proposed for inclusion in the list - Pobitite kamani /Standing Stones/ near Varna, nestinarstvo /dancing over fire/ near Tsarevo are located here as well.

It should be noted that the access to the natural and cultural-historical assets, except to those located in the cities of Varna, Pomorie, Sozopol, Nessebar, Kavarna is difficult and lacks adjacent infrastructure. Beside the listed ones, the opportunities for for natural, historical and cultural tourism are underdeveloped.

### 1.2.6. Maritime tourism

The term "maritime tourism" is not popular in country as it is related with the general tourism along the coast. However, the maritime tourism is co-related with the "beach tourism" which is well developed. There are nearly 70 beaches along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. The water of the Black Sea is low salty and its summer temperature is 24-26 degrees, which makes it suitable for swimming. The tides in the summer are insignificant; there are no strong sea currents and no dangerous animal and plant species for the tourists. The resorts and holiday villages are quite popular from north to south: Albena, Rusalka, Golden Sands, Constantine and Elena, Riviera, Elenite, Sunny Beach, Ravda, Duni, cities Kavarna, Balchik, Varna, Obzor, Nessebar, Pomorie, Burgas, Sozopol, Primorsko, Tsarevo and many others.

The restored site of St. Anastasia Island near Bourgas is a popular destination since 2014.

There are plans for restoration of other Black Sea islands and their promotion as attractive destinations. These are St. Ivan near Sozopol, building artificial islands near Pomorie.

The well-developed accommodation facilities, the good ratio between price and quality identifies the maritime tourism in the region. However there are also serious gaps available in the service infrastructure.

The excessive and enormous building construction on the Black Sea coast during the last 15 years has led to overload of the existing basic infrastructure. The fast large-scale building with hotels and leisure zones are typical for the coast which has led to overcrowding.

The Northernmost and Southernmost territories of the Black Sea coast are perfectly preserved in their natural state and have so far been protected from urban tourism development.

The largest peloid deposits /healing mud/ are in the lakes in Burgas region and Varna Lake and provide products for mud treatment not only for the coastal mud treatment stations, but also for the inland country side.

**The cruise tourism development is low.**

The cruise tourism is related with the sea and port infrastructure, but at the same time there is no efficient capacity within the tourism industry. New investments and the Sea ports facilities in Varna and Burgas can improve the situation in this area and lead to economic growth.

### 1.2.7. Fisheries and aquaculture

Research shows that regular consumption of fish can reduce the risk of cancer and cardiovascular disease. It has also a positive effect on maintaining vision ability. The increased consumption of fish and aquaculture is invariably associated with better human health.

Along with these studies fish consumption in Bulgaria is significantly less than in other countries.

Fish consumption in Bulgaria is at average 5.2 kg per person, which is comparatively low against EU indicators of 21.4 kg per person, Asian - 20.7 kg per person, North America - 24.1 kg per person.

The Bulgarian consumers are oriented towards species such as carp, trout, carp and white fish, which is 80 percent of fish consumption.

The surveyed households indicate the high price of fish and aquaculture as the main reason for these levels.

Bulgaria ranks third in the EU by number of fishing boats and vessels (1150) following Italy and Romania.<sup>1</sup>

There are also no farms for saltwater and Black Sea fish growing. The number of the existing mussel farms is 70 with a total production of 2400 tons/y. Mussels are in the top 5 in the menu, which is preferred by all tourists by the sea.

The biggest mussel farm in Bulgaria is „Black Sea shells”. There can be produced industrial quantities of mussels of highest quality in the Black Sea. The water in the Black Sea is clean and of A class. The quality of the Black Sea mussels is better than the others because of the low water salinity - it is 10%. Currently, the capacity of the

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<sup>1</sup> Study by Ernst and Young, 2011.

farm is over 1000 tons per year, and the production feeds the needs of the whole country. The production goal for the following years 3500 tons/y together with the expansion of both the farm and the factory.

Mussels in Bulgaria are divided into three types - coastal, bottom and cultivated. Each type differs from the place where it has been grown, which in turn determines the quality of its meat.

The shells of the cultivated mussels are thinner and lighter in color. They grow on special ropes for cultivation, which are located in the most favorable environment where there is more oxygen and food, at least 3-4 meters up from the bottom. There is technology to support the mussels grow faster and the water quality at various levels as favorable as possible for the cultivation of mussels is also a matter of in-depth research and constant monitoring.

The “coastal” mussel is another preferred species. It grows attached to stones and tetrapods. Its shell is thicker so as to endure the sea waves. When we eat these mussels, we often find sand inside them, which is normal. Despite this small minus, their meat is extremely clean, tasty and generally of high quality.

Although the total number of fish and aquaculture farms is 451 with a total production 7557.4 tons, the number of farms, respectively the production show a weak development of Black Sea fish and aquaculture.

When discussing Black Sea fishing and development of fisheries and aquaculture, it should be taken into consideration that the EU policy in the recent years has been to reduce the number of commercial fishing vessels in sea waters. There is also a proven decrease in natural populations. At the same time, EU and global demand of fish and fishery products is increasing, especially in countries with high consumption of fish and products. Marine aquaculture is to satisfy this demand.

### 1.2.8. Natural resources

The region has industrial reserves of gas, oil, ores and non-metallic minerals - marble and decorative facing materials in the southern part of the region, a deposit of rock salt in the central part.

Large quantities of manganese-carbonate ore have been found in the Obrochishte deposit in the Northern part, which is the largest in Europe with an approximate capacity of 130 million tons. An important energy source of national importance is the natural gas field on the Black Sea shelf around Galata cape. The deposit operates on a concession from Petreco Bulgaria.

Galata offshore gas field, developed by the American company Petreco Sarl, disposes of about 1.5-2 billion cubic meters of natural gas as reserves.

A number of studies on others are being conducted in the Bulgarian Black Sea area for fossil fuel deposits - oil and gas.

#### 1.2.9. Economic capacity of the maritime zone

GDP in the region is estimated to 9 153 011 thsd BGN which is 13.35% of the national GDP. GDP in the three regions is distributed accordingly: Burgas - 3 409 074 thsd BGN or 5.22% of the national GDP, Varna - 4 464 191 thsd BGN, 6.33% of the national GDP and Dobrich - 1 279 746 thsd BGN or 1.82% of the national GDP.

The main economic activities in the three regions are related to services, followed by industry and agriculture.

It is extremely difficult to determine the share of maritime activities which remain unrevealed in the overall economic tendencies. This entails changes in the statistical set of information, which will probably be discussed within the overall integrated maritime policy of the EU, including all maritime member states. The statistics do not allow the calculation of values for the maritime activities share in GDP.

The EU Operational Programs provide extensive financing of activities in the Black Sea region.

#### 1.2.10. Spatial planning, coastal zone protection, environment

The National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Bulgaria 2014-2030 and the Action Plan for the period 2017-2020 set several key areas with specific goals, priorities and implementation measures:

## 1. Integrated coastal zone management

### *Overall goal*

Coastal zone management to integrate the objectives set by national and regional sectoral policies related to marine and coastal areas taking into account the protection and improvement of the environment and possible climate change.

### *Specific aims*

- ❖ Integrated management of planning and interaction between different areas of the Black Sea territory and marine environment protection.

### *Priorities*

- Maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management
- Spatial development
- Geo-protection of coastal areas
- Safety and security of environment and tourists

### *Measures*

- 1.1 Development and adoption of spatial development plans of territories A and B zones according to the Act on the Black Sea Coast Spatial Development.
- 1.2 Construction of coastal protection facilities along the coast, marking and counteraction of landslides.
- 1.3 Protection of protected areas and Natura 2000 sites.
- 1.4 Mapping of sea bed.
- 1.5 Development of coastal zone integrated management plans, environment development and prevention measures against climate change.
- 1.6 Establishment of integrated security system in the Black Sea region.
- 1.7 Set up Risk management center in the Black Sea.
- 1.8 Creation of Center for Black Sea coast regional management.
- 1.9 Prevention and preparedness of the population as a priority for avoiding the consequences of natural disasters and accidents
- 1.10 Creation of electronic registers and database of environment indicators.
- 1.11 Application of EU Directive on economic environmental accounts.

1.12 Construction of waste water treatment plants in the resorts and coastal cities or expansion of the existing ones.

## 2. Blue growth

### *Overall goal*

Improving the competitiveness of the region by ensuring blue growth and development of marine industries while preserving the natural and environmental potential of the region and integrated interaction between activities in different sectors

### *Specific aims*

- ❖ Support to shipping industry.
- ❖ Development of technologies based on marine resources.
- ❖ Development of fisheries and aquaculture.

### *Priorities*

- Development of shipbuilding and ship repair activities
- Modernization and intensification of malting
- Development of biotechnologies based on marine resources
- Development of maritime fishing activities
- Expand of fishing ports and fishing markets

### *Measures*

- 2.1. Creation and development of regional maritime clusters.
- 2.2. Construction of fishing ports in the Black Sea cities.
- 2.3. Development of fishing fleet.
- 2.4. Development and application of innovations in the utilization of the wave marine energy.
- 2.4. Development of technologies and innovations based on utilization of the maritime resources - biotechnologies, mineral resources, algae, lye, salt, blue energy.
- 2.5. Enhancing entrepreneurship in fishing and processing of Black Sea fish.

### 3. Transport - energy and transport corridors

#### *Overall goals*

- Increasing the competitiveness of the region through an integrated transport model application.
- Improving the transport infrastructure.

#### *Specific aims:*

- Integration of quality transport in all maritime activities and provision of high-quality transport services for all tourist activities.

#### *Priorities*

- Construction of highway „Black Sea”
- Connection of the Bulgarian Black Sea with the EU highway ring around Black Sea.
- Expanding communications in the air transport.
- Development of internal and international water transport.

#### *Measures*

- 3.1. Improving the inland connectivities of the region through construction of first class and second class road network.
- 3.2. Development and implementation of a project for construction of highway „Black Sea”.
- 3.3. Expanding the first class road network.
- 3.4. Development of zones for public access to the ports.
- 3.5. Development of water transport along the coast.
- 3.6. Stimulating the entrepreneurship in maritime transport.
- 3.7. Enlargement of the international flights of Varna and Burgas airports.
- 3.8. Effective and eco-friendly implementation of energy transport corridors.

### 4. Maritime tourism

#### *Overall goals*

- Support to maritime tourism and its transformation as part of the blue growth.

#### *Specific aims*

- Development of maritime tourism and integration of the maritime potential for increasing its competitiveness.

### **Priorities**

- Creation of targeted brand strategy for the Bulgarian Black Sea.
- Increasing the quality of the tourist product and transformation of the Bulgarian Black Sea into EU high-quality destination.
- Development of integrated maritime tourist product.

### **Measures**

- 4.1. Development of maritime and cruises tourism.
- 4.2. Complex approach for development of yacht tourism and yacht ports.
- 4.3. Transformation of cultural and historical sites as part of the sea tourism packages.
- 4.4. Building of tourist infrastructure.
- 4.5. Creation of special brand of the Bulgarian Black Sea and maritime tourism in the National Strategy for tourism development.
- 4.6. Integrated activities of local and regional authorities in the region for establishment of united vision for the maritime tourism development.
- 4.7. Staff trainings in the sites of natural, cultural and historical tourism.
- 4.8. Increasing the security in tourism and safety of tourists.

## **5. Culture**

### **Overall goals**

- Preservation of traditions and dissemination of Bulgarian culture in cross-border regions.

### **Specific aims**

- Formation of maritime culture in the overall maritime policy.

### **Priorities**

- Expand of the cultural presence of Bulgaria in the Black Sea region.
- Integrated approach for maritime culture development in Bulgaria.

### **Measures**

- 5.1 Training of high quality specialists in the field of navigation, shipbuilding, fish and aquaculture processing.
- 5.2 Enhancing the knowledge for the sea - learning activities in the primary schools.
- 5.3. Establishment of university specialties in maritime activities and fisheries.
- 5.4. Set-up pre-conditions for establishment of Black Sea university.
- 5.5. Establishment of Black Sea cultural institute as a basis for learning of history, protection of culture-heritage and formation of maritime culture in the region.
- 5.6. Development of regional press issues for the Black Sea region.

## 6. Transnational cooperation

### *Overall goals*

- Enhancing the relationships between the Black Sea countries and establishment of a Black Sea union through bilateral and international cooperation agreements.

### *Specific aims*

- Strengthening the role of Bulgaria in the international regional Black Sea cooperation.

### *Priorities*

- Improving the cooperation opportunities of Bulgaria with other Black Sea countries.
- Improving the citizens mobility and transportation of goods, services and capitals in the Black Sea general framework.

### *Measures*

1. Creation of high-level group to support the initiatives and enhancing regional cooperation.
2. Improving the participation of Bulgaria in the Black Sea cooperation structures.
3. Strengthening the role of the civil sector for the partnership and cooperation development.
4. Support to creation of international clusters and consortium.

### 3. GREEN HISTORIC/CULTURAL TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

#### 1.1. Strategic Action Plan for environmental protection and rehabilitation of the Black Sea

The Black Sea coast is close to the ultraviolet comfort southern limit. It provides real opportunities for heliotherapy from March to October and optimal opportunities in April-September, and in June-August there is even an excess of ultraviolet radiation. The area is characterized by about 1,700 hours of sunshine from May to October.

The sea salt content is relatively low compared to other seas (almost twice less than the salinity of the Mediterranean Sea). One of the great advantages of the Black Sea is that it does not contain life-threatening species of marine flora and fauna.

According to its chemical composition, the sea water refers to chlorine-sodium and bitter sulphate-magnesium waters which provide the recreational and healing value and qualities.

The air quality also has a direct impact on the tourism development. Research shows that the indicators of pollution during the active tourist season meet the reference terms for resorts and recreation areas. Increased pollution rates are reported during the winter period when heating is used. The use of solid fuels (wood and coal) for heating in the domestic sector is the main pollutant factor. Air pollution from transport is less and it refers mainly to the coastal zones.

The natural sea aerosol in combination with the clear air, are natural resources with a powerful healing climate effect.

The natural bays, the beautiful beaches and the safe sea provide excellent conditions for the development of yacht and diving. The flora and fauna are represented by traditional and rarer species for which protected areas have been designated. The flore and fauna represent typical coastal habitats, rare and endangered and psamphytic (sandy) species.

The conclusions regarding the use of natural resources for the tourism development can be summarized as follows:

- ✓ There are favorable natural conditions for the summer recreational tourism development from beginning of April to the end of October.
- ✓ Extensive dunes, beaches and the appealing sand (golden in color) attract tourists.
- ✓ The beach attractiveness is enhanced by the characteristics of the Black Sea - relatively low salinity and lack of life-threatening flora and fauna. The flat bottom level makes the beaches attractive for families and groups of children.
- ✓ The unique mixture of mountain and sea air presupposes the development of health tourism.
- ✓ Biodiversity provides good conditions for hunting and photo tourism.
- ✓ There are favorable natural conditions for development of yacht and diving.
- ✓ There are excellent natural conditions for ecotourism development as eco-paths have been created.

The sea beaches are managed by the Ministry of regional development and public works and the Ministry of Tourism.

The antique monuments such as Thracian, Hellenistic and Roman include the following: Thracian tombs in which gold ornaments and other luxury items have been found; remains of rich homes dating back to the Hellenistic era; buildings from Roman and early Byzantine times. During the underwater research, protective walls of old ports have been found, as well as valuable finds, which are exhibited in the archaeological museums. There is a need of unified electronic information system and a register of sites of cultural and historical importance. The information boards for the visitors related to the cultural and historical heritage, road markings and road signs are insufficient.

### 1.1.1. Auto transport

*Infrastructure of the auto transport for the tourists.*

The barriers and constraints that hinder the development of passenger road transport are the following:

- ✓ Significant delay in construction of some of the main roads. This has mostly affected the construction of the country highway ring and a number of other facilities such as: garages, gas stations, etc.
- ✓ Unsatisfactory condition of the road fleet in terms of quality, functionality and structure. The following changes are needed to be undertaken to improve the road infrastructure:
  1. Long-term policy in development of the transport scheme and the organization of road transport.
  2. Construction of sufficient number of parking places, blue zones, green areas, etc.

### *Tourist bus trips*

The tourist bus trips often satisfy three main groups of needs: the need for short-term travel, the need for a passive experience and the need for joint group communication and empathy. These needs also determine the priority ranking of buses in the scale of tourists' preferences. Studies have shown that it is preferred mainly due to the social format of the tourist demand. The majority of the customers are the elderly, children and young people, etc. The bus is also used for tourist trips of the disabled, diseased people, etc. The efforts of improvement of the passenger vehicles and keep relatively low transport prices presuppose the increasing importance of use of road transport while implementing tourist trips. The extensive construction of modern roads and facilities, the increase of the passenger service quality in roadside restaurants and sites, the improvement of the constructive and operational characteristics of the cars also contribute to these efforts.

### **1.1.2. Electricity supply**

The use of alternative energy sources is increasing in the domestic consumption. Programs have been developed to promote the use of energy from renewable sources and biofuels, a number of projects and events have been realized and are envisaged for the introduction of new technologies by the local population and the tourist

infrastructure owners. Street lighting is provided by sodium, energy saving and metal halide lamps.

The main areas the municipal administration should be focused on are the following:

- ✓ Introduction of alternative energy on the Bulgarian Black Sea territory as a main long-term source.
- ✓ Construction of a new electricity grid system.
- ✓ Gasification of more sites.
- ✓ Public cleanliness, hygiene and waste treatment

Despite the progress shown, there are some problems and guidelines for further development as follows:

- Improper and unconscious waste collection by cleaning workers
- Insufficient involvement of the local population and the hotel and restaurant owners in the separate waste collection
- Violations in the construction waste disposal in the household places
- Lack of consensus among hoteliers on the location of waste containers

## 1.2. Incentives of green tourism and historical heritage as a blueprint for the economic development of the Bulgarian Black Sea region

The advantages of the natural assets along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast can be determined as follows:

- Favorable beach line and climate (availability of recreational and maritime tourism)
- Various relief and mountains (availability of ski, adventure and speleo tourism)
- Plenty of waters (incl. Mineral and thermal springs) (availability of spa, medical, sport tourism)
- Rich culture heritage (availability of cultural, religious/cult, cognitive, culinary, folk, ethno tourism)
- Modern infrastructure (business, congress, event, shopping tourism)



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- Rich flora and fauna (eco-tourism)



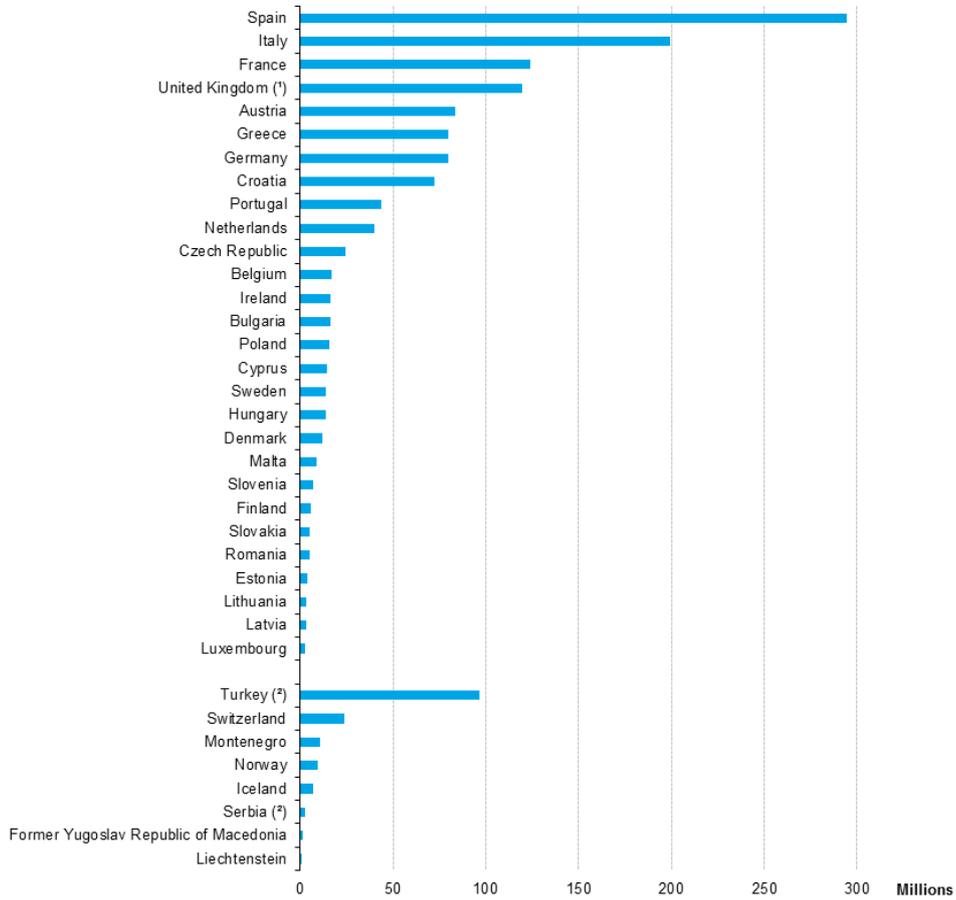
Fig. 1. Black Sea region

Eurostat data of the tourist flow

Common borders. Common solutions.



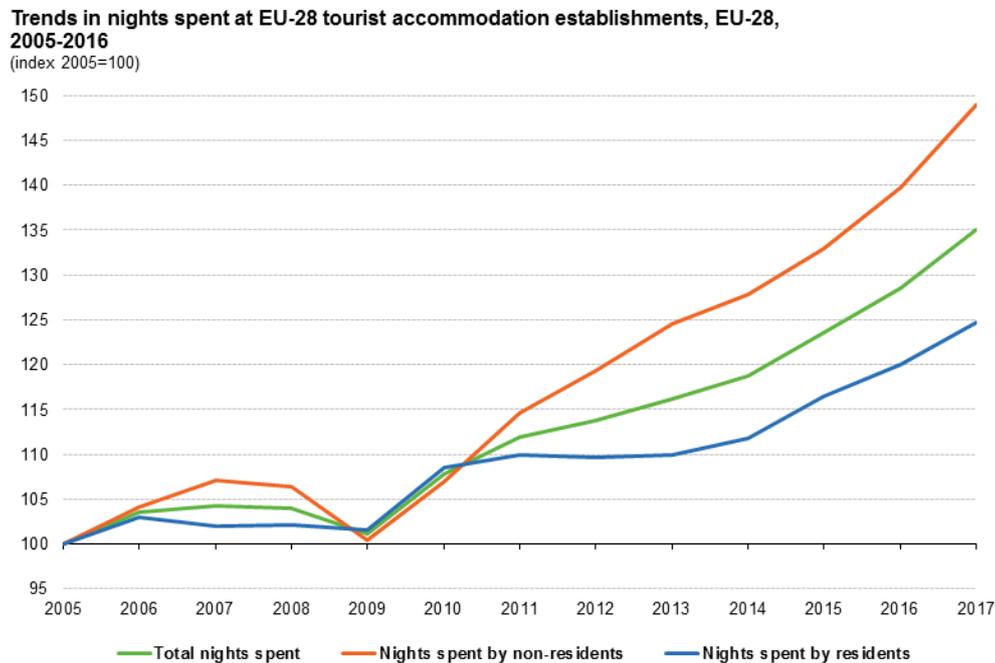
Project funded by the EUROPEAN UNION



(\*) Estimated using monthly data.  
(\*) 2015 data.

Fig. 2. Eurostat data for the tourist flow

## Tourism destinations - accommodation in tourist establishments, 2016 (mln.).



Note: EU-28 aggregate estimated for the purpose of this publication, using the latest available data for the EU Member States. Because of methodological improvements for some Member States data from 2012 onwards are not entirely comparable with previous years (this can affect the estimation of the EU-28 aggregate).

Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour\_occ\_ninat)

eurostat 

Fig. 3. Trends in nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments

The major problems concerning the safety and security of tourists can be summarized as follows:

- Violation of the public environment by the high level of noise from bars and places for entertainment out of the officially permitted hours;
- Insufficient number of the safety roads for tourists travelling by private cars;
- Established bad practice of frauds occurred in the exchange bureaus;
- Unregulated money exchange on the streets;
- Pickpocketing in buses and public places, thefts of personal luggage on the beaches.

### 1.2.1. Sport tourism

Sea sports, more specifically the sailing has a long tradition among the local population with many evidences of achievements at national and international level. There are traditional sailing competitions and regattas organized that attract many aportsmen and fans of the sport.

### 1.2.2. Balenological tourism

Balneology in Bulgaria has the longest history. The rest and recreation activities have originated on the Thracian medicine, established as a natural medicine. The ancient Greeks also widely used Bulgarian mineral waters. Swimming pools have been built near the mineral springs and balneotherapy has been used for the time being. During the Roman era (I- VII century) balneological resorts were revered, which is associated with the strengthening the physical power of the legions. The first categories of mineral waters were given. The Romans settled the areas around the healing springs. During the Middle Ages, mineral waters were used mainly for hygienic purposes. The increased interest in balneotherapy in the 20th century has attracted and ensured the incoming foreign tourists.

Nowadays Bulgaria disposes of hdrothermal resources, which are unique in their content and popular with their healing qualities. The climate is healthy and has a healing effect in certain regions of the country. A variety of holidays, warm sea, fresh green areas and mountain air, in combination with various healing procedures, have a beneficial effect on many diseases. The health centers are located in some of the most picturesque places in Bulgaria.

Balneological tourism is one of the main tourist products offered in Bulgaria and the main way to utilize the significant resources: hot, warm and cold mineral springs, healing mud. Analyzes have shown the increasing interest in spa tourism in Europe.

България предлага над 70 хотела специализирани в балнеологията и предлагачи висококачествен продукти. Bulgaria offers over 70 hotels specializing in balneology and offering high quality products.

The calneological resort centers of national importance are the following:

The resorts of Albena, Golden Sands, St. Konstantin and Elena, Sunny Beach.

### 1.2.3. Eco tourism

#### *Motivation and expectations of the potential tourists*

Studies on the motivation and preferences of ecotourism travel show that they are organized as part of a tourist holiday in the nature. The most important elements of the ecotourism trip are as follows: staying in nature, observing wild animals and plants in their natural habitat and natural forms, visiting national and nature parks. The cultural component is also extremely important, as nature and culture are closely linked to each other. The motive for ecotourism trips are the meetings with the local people, empathy with the cultural traditions and the local way of life, acquaintance with local products and cuisine. Various sports activities and hiking are also mentioned as part of the motivation for undertaking tourist trips in nature. The common perception of the tourists - users of ecotourism packages is that they tend to pay a higher price, but expect activities and services of very high quality. This wide variety of motives presupposes the use of a particular set of products and services while living in a preserved natural environment. The viewpoints of the clients stipulated that the ecotourism routes should not be dominated entirely by eco-activities, but should be accompanied by cultural and sports activities.

This is evidenced by the products' types which can be attributed to ecotourism.

There are several programs that consumers can identify with ecotourism:

- ✚ Walking tours and other means of mountain tourism;
- ✚ Excursions aimed to review the wild nature, flora and fauna;
- ✚ Specialized excursions such as ornithology and trips to national parks;
- ✚ Tourist excursions which offer also sport and cultural activities as mix programmes.

It is also offered:

- ✚ Walks along forest paths with professional leader - these are soft activities and extreme experiences for people of all ages;
- ✚ Ecological discussions related to the fauna, wild animals, etc.;

- ✚ Monitoring of animals and their activities;
- ✚ Photo and video making of animal - special platforms have been created for the purpose.

#### 1.2.4. Rural tourism

During the summer private entrepreneurs offer a number of events for tourists while visiting the villages. There are crafts, local cuisine and culture are demonstrated. These activities provide employment and livelihood for part of the local population, but have a strong seasonal character.

In general, the international political environment provides favorable conditions for the development of tourism in Bulgaria. Along with the military-political crisis in Syria and Iraq, the emigration crisis affecting Turkey, and the political and terrorist crises in Egypt and Tunisia, Bulgaria is perceived as a peaceful, safe and secure tourist destination. Our country significantly improves its rating according to the World Peace Index of the Institute of Economics and Peace at the University of Sydney, Australia. In 2016 Bulgaria scaled to 29<sup>th</sup> place among 163 countries observed around the world.

A potential threat to Bulgaria's tourism is vivid in the refugee flows concentrated in Turkey and directed to Western Europe.

Bulgaria's membership in the World Tourism Organization and the active participation of the country in the Organization activities brings a positive impact on the tourism development in the country. In 2016 at the initiative of the Ministry of Tourism Bulgaria was held the first International Congress of World Civilizations and Ancient Routes. At the end of 2018, Bulgaria hosted the second edition of the International Congress of World Civilizations and Ancient Routes at the World Tourism Organization.

A positive asset is Bulgaria's EU membership in the EU as a source of security, application of European standards and rules for democracy and political relations. The EU presidency of Bulgaria in the first half of 2018 had an extremely positive impact in the long run on the tourist image of our country. Bulgaria's tourism policy is

linked to the EU, which aims to position Europe as a leading tourist destination on the world tourism market. The task is the tourism industry to be an engine of economic growth, employment and income for the population of the EU countries.

The Bulgarian government through the Ministry of Tourism (MT) actively participates in the implementation of the EU policy for establishment and expansion of the tourism relations with China. On this basis, MT is actively working for communication positioning of destination Bulgaria on the Chinese market, for greater recognition of the Bulgarian tourist product and for the presentation of Bulgaria as a year-round tourist destination. The urban planning of the national resorts, the concession and exploitation of tourist resources (beaches, ski slopes, mineral springs, real cultural values); the use of protected areas for tourism; education and professional training of tourist staff; the import of foreign workers for tourism; the role and functions of non-governmental tourism organizations are extremely important for the future tourism development and progress.

Tourism interacts with many other economic sectors at horizontal level and falls within the scope of a variety of legal norms for regulating public relations, political, economic, social, etc. issues. From this point of view, the synchronization of the Bulgarian legislation with the EU is favorable for the development of the sector, within the framework of which specialized and general laws with positive impact on the tourism development have been adopted.

The applied tax policy, and in particular the flat tax rate of 10%, has a favorable effect on the development of Bulgarian tourism.

The state institutions managing tourism activities in Bulgaria correspond to the EU standards. Public authorities implement economic policies to support and stimulate the development of SMEs, taking into account their leading role in the development of the national economy.

Bulgaria is characterized by a dynamic legal framework governing the state policy in the field of tourism and the bodies and organizations for its implementation. In the recent years, three editions of the Tourism act have been adopted and repeatedly amended.

The objectives of the Tourism act are the following:

- Provision of the favorable conditions for the tourism development and competitive national tourist product;
- Creation of conditions for the development of maritime and skip tourism and its related activities - cultural, health tourism (balneological, SPA, wellness, medical tourism), mountain, rural, wine, eco, congress, kids and youth, adventure, sport, hunting, golf tourism, etc.;
- Introduction of unified criteria for tourism activities and offer of tourist services;
- Ensure of protection of the users of the tourist services;
- Creation of conditions for the sustainable development of the national resorts.

### 1.3. Profile of the foreign tourists in Bulgaria

The census results shown during the recent years highlight the following:

Bulgaria is a preferred destination for people aged between 25 and 45 years. They are mainly attracted by the favorable prices and conditions offered by the Bulgarian resorts. In the winter season the dominated tourists are between 25 and 35 years of age, while in summer the share of adults aged 35 to 45 is the highest. The tourists with children under 17 are more in the summer than those in the winter.

Older tourists (over 45 and retirees) prefer holidays in balneological resorts, cultural and cognitive tours, taking part in events where they can learn more about the local culture, history and customs.

Foreign tourists spend relatively little money on services and entertainment in Bulgaria, apart from those included in their travel packages.

The following elements are of high rating of satisfaction: prices, hotel conditions, cuisine and natural resources.

The lowest ratings are for the tourist information, local transport, car rental, airport service and staff service.

The opportunities for rural and eco tourism are not so popular and need further promotion.

The number of individual tourists seeking for non traditional and new experience in unknown country is increased. The younger generation (aged between 25 and 45) prefer to spend holidays with friends especially when they single.

The visits to our country for vacation dominate - these are over 60% of all foreigners who have visited the country. They come mostly from Germany, Great Britain, Scandinavia, Central Europe, Russia, Ukraine and the Soviet countries. Those from the United States and the Balkans come for business purposes. The share of business visits from Western Europe and Scandinavia is significantly high.

The main sources of information about our country and the decision making factor are the following: previous experience, support by travel agency, recommendation from friends and relatives and the Internet.

The leading preferences in selection of holiday destination in Bulgaria are the following: the reasonable prices, the state of the beaches and resorts, the interest to visit the country, the beautiful nature, followed by the culture of the country, previous visits and personal interest (hobby).

It should be concluded that the main motivation in choosing the Bulgarian tourist product is the good price/quality ratio.

## **Tourist infrastructure in Varna**

### *Year-round tourism in Varna Regin and the resorts near Varna*

Until now there was a low level of accommodation in the region and insufficient attractive tourist infrastructure.

According to NSI<sup>2</sup> data in December 2018 there were 151 places of over 10 beds for accommodation in Varna region, among which are - hotels, motels, campsites, chalets and other places for short-term accommodation. The number of rooms inside is 6.8 thsd, and the number of beds - 14.8 thsd. The total number of operating accommodation facilities has increased by 5.6%, and the number of beds - by 4.8% compared to December 2017.

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<sup>2</sup> NSI - National Statistics Institute

Nevertheless, the total accommodation occupancy in the summer 2018 was 12.4% and has continuously declining. Compared to the same month of the previous year the bed occupancy has decreased by 0.8%, with the largest decrease in the 3-star accommodation facilities - by 2.6%. The available accommodation beds in the region were 14.8 thsd and the occupancy was estimated only to 1.8 thsd (1873 overnight stays).

### *Construction of attractive SPA complexes*

The construction of attractive spa complexes aimed at offering "four seasons" services has been applied for years in Germany (Tropical Islands), Romania (Therme Bucharest), Greece, Poland, Latvia, France (Aquaboulevard), Japan and even in Norway (Pirbadet Waterpark) on the seafront of large covered pools and spa facilities. AQUAHOUSE Thermal & Beach spa center is situated in St Constantine and Helena resort near Varna and offers year-round services of balneological treatment, prevention, etc.

The main advantage of the water parks built near the major resorts on the Black Sea coast, such as those in Golden Sands and Sunny Beach, is that the attractions are offered as part of the tourist packages guests pay when booking their vacation.

AQUAPOLIS aquapark in Golden Sands resort has unique Moorish-Mediterranean architecture. It is a unique place for fun and relaxation and is located in the forest of Golden Sands Nature Park. Aquapolis is spread over area of 40 000 sq.m. and some of the best water attractions are located there - swimming pools, water slides, jacuzzis, fountains and waterfalls, ancient towers and shells. It is the first aquapark built in Bulgaria.

ACTION Aquapark in Sunny Beach resort is a water theme park, spread over 36 acres in the western part of the resort. Action aquapark is the greenest water park in Bulgaria. Surrounded by greenery of tropical palms, cypresses and Mediterranean shrubs, the park is the only one with its own Mini Zoo. Currently, the park offers over 30 water attractions and entertainments.

That is why many businesses offer construction of hotels, bowling alleys, fitness complexes, casinos, etc. for year-round visits for increasing the efficiency of the

facilities operation. This ensures the extension of the seasonal tourism and turns it into year-round attraction of the tourist sites.

The water entertainment business in Bulgaria is still in its initial phase compared to those operating around Europe. The rapid tourism development in Bulgaria in recent years and the significantly increased number of Western European tourists presupposed the need of construction of more and modern water parks. Unfortunately, today the demand of this service exceeds the supply, as in the last year the accommodation facilities on the Black Sea coast have been increased significantly, and currently there are not enough places for tourists' entertainments.

#### 1.4. Research among 500 people interested in tourism

*Marketing of tourist destinations through offer of events*

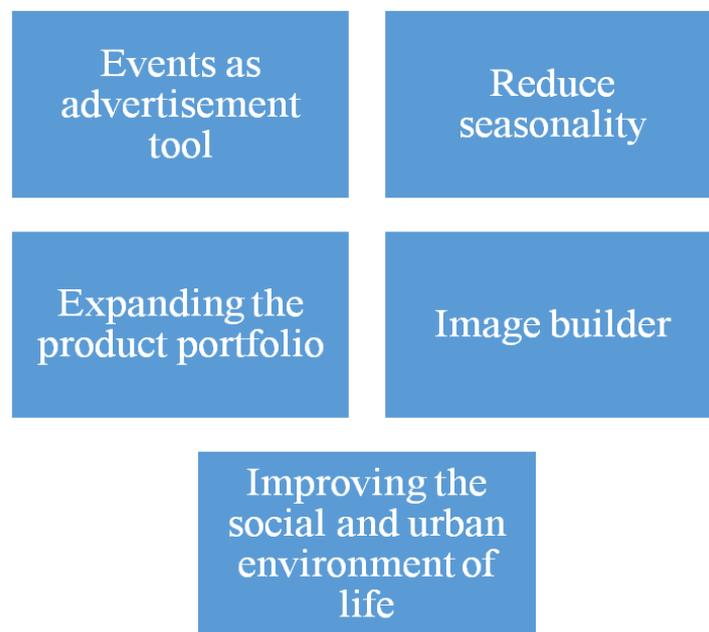


Fig.4. Marketing of destinations through offer of events

The supplementary events organized in the tourist destinations lead to: (table 1):

- They are perceived as a way of entertainment

- They reduce the seasonal offers of tourist services
- The events increase the product portfolio
- They increase the image of the tourist place
- The events lead to improvement of the social and urban living environment

*Calendar of events - international, national, local events -factors of influence*

1. Main interests of the tourists
2. How much are the tourists aware of the organization of events
3. Readiness of the tourists to take part in events
4. Motives of a visit to event
5. Preferred information channels
6. Preferred channel for booking tickets, if applicable
7. Access to the event territory

*Motives of a visit to event*

Motive	Number	Percentage of 466 respondents
Bulgarian Folk music and dances	221	47.42
DJ, singer, band	218	46.78
Sport activity	50	10.72
Visit to a sport event	38	8.15
Not motivated	40	8.58

Table 1. Motives of visits to events

### Willingness of a visit to event

Event		Age			Total	Percentage of 466 respondents
		18-35	36-55	55+		
„Rock Festival Kavarna”		18-35	36-55	55+		
International Folk Festival and Fair of crafts in Varna	да	75	36	16	127	27.25
Music Festival	да	40	52	48	140	30.04
„Spirit of Burgas”	да	93	34	11	138	29.61
Sport events in Albena	да	37	9	12	58	12.44
International festival „Varna summer”	да	108	45	30	183	39.27

Table 2. Willingness of a visit to event

### Preferred channel for rezervation

Booking channel	Age			Total	Percentage of 466 respondents
	18-35	36-55	55+		
Included in the package prices	48	12	10	70	15.02
Info center located at the tourist destination	37	4	4	45	9.65
Through agents	202	103	89	394	84.54
Direct sales from the event organizer	40	13	7	60	12.87

Table 3. Preferred channel for rezervation

*Preferred place or accessibility of the event*

Accessibility of events	Age			Total	Percentage of 466 respondents
	18-35	36-55	55+		
Near the accommodation place	127	53	59	239	51.28
Accessibility through organized transport	147	79	67	293	62.87
Accessibility by public transport	62	19	6	87	18.66

Table 4. Preferred place or accessibility to the event

The tourist offer has the following intrinsic characteristics:

- Demand for quality, comfort and safety
- Demand of suitable transport
- Demand for leisure and relax facilities through physical activities (golf grounds)
- Demand of suitable tourist products of lonely people
- Higher demand in the active tourist season
- Increased demand of luxury and specialized tourist products
- Increased demand of short urban trips in periods usually considered as inattractive
- Increased attitude to health care, which affects the choice of destinations offering "wellness products" such as centers for balneology and fitness
- Increased demand of specialized cultural, art and historic products
- Increased demand of destinations offering event tourism, participation to festivals, contests, exhibitions, spectacles, concerts, sport, culinary events, etc.

- The experience and critical thinking stimulate tourists to visit places and objects again being previously satisfied of the services
- Increased mobility which leads to the increased demand of car rent
- The preferences of the tourist are increasingly oriented towards complex, diverse and balanced tourism offers.
- The number of online tourists is increasing - they are active users of digital information, social network and the electronic and mobile applications reservation of a tourist trip.

The tendency the tourists to return to the initial experiences redirect their interest to simpler vacations - from hotel to bungalow, villa, private accommodation, caravan, camping.

The overall assessment is that demographic and socio-cultural changes in global, regional and national contexts lead to innovations in the tourist destinations, diversification and enrichment of the tourist products and the marketing elements - prices, distribution channels and communication.

### *Environmental conditions*

According to studies by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the European Environment Agency (EEA), significant climate change has taken place over the last 30 years and global warming will continue for decades to come, affecting ecosystems and society.

Climate change is changing the preferences of tourists for different tourist destinations and creating difficulties for the tourism business. Long-term forecasts show that Bulgaria will face serious challenges against climate change due to the strong sensitivity of summer sea and winter mountain ski tourism.

Bulgaria participates in the international initiatives aimed to reduce the negative climate change and climate impacts on Earth. As a party to the Kyoto Protocol (in accordance with Art.10, par.bl and Art.9 of the Climate Change Mitigation Act), as well as as an EU member state and in accordance with the provisions of Art. 9 of the Climate Change Mitigation Act, Bulgaria is committed to develop and implemetn a

National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change. The Ministry of Tourism is among the institutions responsible for the development and implementation of policies for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The process of over-reconstruction, generation of wastewater and municipal solid waste, irresponsible use of natural resources (relief, climate, water, biodiversity and landscape), affect the environmental components and lead to serious environmental problems that reduce the quality of the complex tourist product and decrease the image of the whole destination.

This is especially applicable for the most popular destinations and the increase of uncontrolled number of tourists managed by the travel agencies or cruise ships and thus deteriorates not only the tourist sites but also the travelers' experiences. Hundreds of protests by city administrations and the population in these tourist destinations - Venice, Dubrovnik, Barcelona, Paris, etc., have fundamentally changed the economic, social and ethical relations between tourists and local communities.

Since its accession to the European Union, Bulgaria has achieved significant improvements in its environmental performance. The Bulgarian legislation corresponds to the environmental requirements in the EU, but there are challenges in relation to its effective implementation at national level.

#### Highlights:

- Expand of the tourist products through development of alternative types of tourism - wedding, festival, cultural cognitive, historic-archaeological, congress, sport, religious tourism through use of well-known and launch of new and sparsely known sites and objects;
- Development of the tourist brand as safe, secure and quality destination of sustainable year-round tourism;
- Reconstruction, modernization and extension of the tourist infrastructure - pipelines for waste and rain water, road network, signs, etc.
- Control and monitoring of the tourist business for observing the established procedures of realization and reporting of tourist activities.



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Management and protection of the tourist resources. Priorities

1. Development of the tourism infrastructure.
2. Development of the tourist superstructure.
3. Development of new types of year-round tourism.

Common borders. Common solutions.

## 4. THE BLACK SEA COAST - UNLIMITED SEA SPACE, BEACHES AND UNIQUE NATURAL FORMATIONS

The Bulgarian Black Sea coast is a magnificent coast, which is rare in the world. This is a graceful combination of unique natural creations, a consequence of the eternal struggle between the land and the water.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

The Bulgarian Black Sea coast has a clear meridional extension. It covers a land strip of 40 - 60 km and coastal waters 22,224 km of width. In general, the Bulgarian coast (378 km) is poorly indented, but the coastal terrain is extremely diverse. From the border with Romania to Cape Shabla, the relief of the lowest shore is diversified by the lakes Durankulak, Ezerets and Shabla, Shabla Tuzla, beaches and sandy slopes. Between Cape Shabla and Cape Kaliakra, the karstic limestone layers of the Dobrudzha plateau near the coast end with steep cliffs and landslide steps. Numerous caves and niches gape along them; the shore is dotted with protruding underwater rocks. In the picturesque Varna Bay, on the golden beaches with fine-grained sand, the slopes of the Dobrudzha, Frangen and Momino plateaus rise majestically.

The Old Pannonian part of the Black Sea coast is an amazing panorama of vast expanses of sea, beaches and wooded mountain ridges, crowned by the majestic Cape Emine. It is followed by Nessebar and Pomorie peninsulas and the large Burgas Bay - the westernmost point of the Black Sea. Next to it, in the vast Burgas lowland, are the largest Bulgarian lakes.

To the south, all the way to the border with Turkey, stretches the beautiful Southern Black Sea Coast - a real necklace of rocky promontories, ending the mountain branches of Strandzha, small picturesque bays with beaches and sandy slopes and several small islands (St. Anastasia, St. Ivan, Zmiyski island, etc.) scattered along the coast.

## 1.1. NorthEastern Bulgaria

The northern Black Sea coast is usually kept away from the hustle and bustle of Southern seaside resorts and is still relatively unknown for most tourists. However, this is by no means a disadvantage. The tranquility and beauty of this part of the Bulgarian coast make the area an ideal destination for any nature lover.

### 1.1.1. Srebarna Reserve - guest to the pelicans

Srebarna is the only large lake preserved after the drying of the numerous swamps and lakes along our Danube coast. It is located 1 km away from the coast, 16 km West of Silistra.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

The reed, reaching 6-7 m in height, occupies two thirds of the area of the lake and forms many floating islands (cats). On its shores grow ferns and sour grasses, and in the water areas there are rare and endangered aquatic plants (water lily, insectivorous plants, etc.).

The central part of the lake is covered with shiny water grass, which glitters like silver on clear moonlit nights and in low sun. It is believed that the name of the lake is associated with this brilliance.

As early as 1878, the prominent Hungarian traveler Felix Kanitz called Srebarna the "Eldorado of Swamp Birds". Here there are sit, winter laid and flied about 150 species of birds, many of them endangered - mute swan, various species of herons, cormorant, brilliant ibis, wild mushrooms, black and river tern, white-fronted and gray goose, large bee-eater, great diver, 11 species of wild ducks, etc. Here is the only nesting place of the great egret. However, the colony of Dalmatian pelicans is the pearl of Srebarna reserve.

Bird species in the reserve are mammals - 35 species (blind dog, otter, colorful ferret, golden hamster, etc.). From the great fish wealth in the past, due to the long isolation of the lake from the Danube River, today there are very few species left - pike, redbfin, caracuda, perch, perch, catfish. There are 12 species of amphibians and

reptiles in the reserve. Lake Srebarna is part of the Ramsar Convention (1975), it is a Biosphere reserve as from 1977 and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1983.

In the immediate vicinity of Silistra is the picturesque village of Vetren in Dobrudzha - a preferred place for accommodation near the nature reserve "Lake Srebarna". We recommend that you stay in "Pelican" guest house located in the heart of nature, next to a small grove, which is heard all year round by bird voices, and you can often hear the howls of jackals that inhabit the area.

The house offers comfort and tranquility and the opportunity to relax, with perfect opportunities for bird watching, butterflies, dragonflies, mammals, rare plants in its vicinity.

There are very good opportunities for fishing in the Danube and the surrounding lakes, as well as for cycling in nature, visiting ancient archaeological finds, as well as learning about local folklore.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>





Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

### 1.1.2. Ivanovski rock temples

Ivanovo rock-hewn churches are located 18 km from the city of Ruse. They have distinctively preserved frescoes compared to other complexes in Bulgaria. Unlike the traditional monasteries, which consist of 1-2 churches, monastic and economic part, in Ivanovo there is a variety of small rock churches, chapels and cells carved at different heights in the rocks of the picturesque canyon of the Rusenski Lom River. The churches near Ivanovo are part of the hundreds of medieval rock churches, monasteries, hermitages and separate hermitage cells, which in the period X-XIV century turned the river valley and its tributaries into a Bulgarian spiritual center.

The churches and all the rooms near the "Letters" locality form the rock monastery "St. Archangel Michael". It was founded in the XIII century by the monk Joachim, who was later elected the first patriarch of Tarnovo. During the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, the monastery maintained ties with the royal court in Tarnovo. Its donors were Kings Ivan Assen II, Ivan Alexander and other representatives of ruling families.

The monastery has a complex structure uniting the complexes of rock rooms near the so-called "Buried" church "St. Archangel Michael. The most richly decorated with frescoes are the "Demolished" church and the "St. Mother of God" church. The monastery temples have preserved wall paintings from the XIII and XIV centuries, created by masters from Sofia and present the development of painting styles in Bulgaria. The frescoes in "St. Bogoroditsa" church as from the 14th century are present the supreme development of medieval art. A large number of graffiti are

preserved on the walls of the monastery premises, among which is the famous inscription of Ivo Gramatik. In 14th century the monastery was the center of hesychasm. It also existed in the early centuries of Ottoman time, but gradually declined. Ivanovo rock churches are included in the UNESCO and are among the 9<sup>th</sup> culture heritage sites in Bulgaria. The Ivanovo rock monastery was founded in the 1920s by the monk Joachim, who together with his students built the first rock church. It, together with the other churches in the area form "St. Archangel Michael" rock monastery. Throughout the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, the monastery maintained lasting ties with the royal court in Tarnovo. Its patrons were the kings Ivan Assen II (1218-1241), Ivan Alexander (1331-1371) and other members of the ruling families, portraits of whom are preserved. King George-Terter I (1280 - 1292) at the end of his life became a monk in one of the cells of the monastery and ended his life there. His grave is located on the third floor of the Baptistry".



Source: <http://www.bulgariamonasteries.com>

The Ivanovo rock monastery is inactive one and form a network of 20 small rock churches, chapels and cells carved into the rocks of the picturesque canyon of Rusenski Lom River. The premises are located 32 meters above the water level and are connected with paths and rock stairs. During the religious complex apogee, the rock churches numbered about 40, and the monk cells and other premises - about 300. Ivanovo monastery is the most famous of the rock monastery group in Dobrudzha

region. Ivanovo monastery unites the complexes of rock rooms near the so-called "Buried" church (chapel "St. Archangel Michael"), the Baptistry, Gospodev dol, the "Demolished" church ("St. Theodore") and "St. Bogoroditsa" church. Wall paintings from XIII and XIV centuries are preserved in the monastery, among which abundant ancient motifs are - naked female statues serving as supports, columns on lions, masks and more. Among them is the so-called incised inscription of Ivo Gramatik, dating from the end of the 13th century.



Source: <http://www.bulgariamonasteries.com>

The main church in Ivanovo Monastery - "Holy Mother of God" is carved 38 meters of height and is painted inside with biblical and evangelical scenes and images. Among them are the scenes "The Last Supper", "Entering Jerusalem", "St. John the Baptist", "The Passion of the Christ", images of the Apostles and other saints. Plentiful frescoes can be seen in "Gospodev dol" chapel, among them "The Blessing Jesus Christ", and the scenes of "Assumption", "Ascension of Christ" and "Christ's descent into hell" are depicted in the altar niche. An inscription-confession on the wall mentions that the Bulgarian king Georgi Terter became a monk and was buried at this place.

"The Buried Church" is another preserved one in Ivanovo rock monastery. One of the patrons of the church was Tsar Ivan Asen II as visible from his portrait depicted with a

scale model of the church in his hands, which is the traditional way of depicting patrons. Another church in the complex, called by the locals simply "The Church" was founded by King Ivan Alexander. It also preserves valuable frescoes, transforming biblical scenes in the style of Justinian's renaissance through the eyes of local masters.

Ivanovo monastery does not offer food or sleep, but in the village nearby Ivanovo several places can be found for the purpose.



Source: [www.bulgariatravel.org](http://www.bulgariatravel.org)

The sightseeings passing through the route are Aladzha Monastery, the most famous rock monastery on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, the Botanical Garden in Balchik, which contains unique plants and Cape Kaliakra - sheer cliffs descending to the sea, which is carved at the foot, their caves, niches and arches.

Duration: 1 day

Distance Varna - Aladzha Monastery - 14 km.

Distance Aladzha Monastery - Balchik - 29 km

Distance Balchik - Cape Kaliakra - 32 km

### 1.1.3. Shabla



Source: частни фотографии

Due to the many ships that sank during the Second World War, the area of Shabla is a preferred diving destination. Shabla lighthouse is the oldest preserved navigation facility on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. In 1951 the first oil field in Bulgaria was discovered here.

### 1.1.4. Shabla lake

Shabla Lake Protected Area is a wetland of international importance included in the Ramsar Convention. "Shabla Lake" is the best preserved, in terms of human activity, wetland on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

Shabla Lake is located right on the beach, 5 km northeast of the town of Shabla. Originally is Lake Liman, formed by the old valley bay (dry valley) of Shablenska River. The lake has an open water area of 79 ha (together with Lake Ezerets - about 150 ha) and a maximum depth of 9.5 m.

To the east it is separated from the sea by a long sand-dune strip (about 100 m long and 30-50 m wide), and to the north by the neighboring Ezerets Lake it is separated by a narrow sandy hair, through which an artificial canal has been dug. Shabla Lake is drainless, but freshwater - its salinity is only one per mille. In its western part the lake is fed by underwater karst springs, and in the east, through the sandy strip, there is some infiltration of sea water.

The flora of the lake is rich. There are 32 species of algae and over 79 species of higher plants. The shores are overgrown with reeds and rushes, and on the open, shining like a mirror water surface; the exquisite colors of water lilies are peeling. In autumn, the fern dries and surrounds its blue waters with a golden halo.

Numerous birds are the great treasure of Shabla Lake. Here 57 species nest, 10 of which are rare, and during the migration of birds in the lake overwinter an average of 30,000 large white-fronted geese and almost the entire population (about 16,000) of

the red-breasted goose, which is an endangered species worldwide. Ducks also winter here, and their number increases significantly during migration. Shabla Lake is rich in fish and lake crabs. In the past, the average annual catch of carp reached 6 tons, and crabs - up to 300,000.

Cape Shabla is the easternmost point of Bulgaria. It is located southeast of Shabla Lake. On the rocky shore rises the oldest Bulgarian lighthouse, built in 1856 by a French project. Remains of the ancient city of Karon Limen have been discovered in the small bay near the promontory. Near Lake Shabla is another interesting site - Shabla Tuzla. Tuzla is 2 km south of the lake and is a super-salt lagoon with an area of 19 ha and a maximum depth of 0.4 m.

The average salinity of the water is 40 per mille, but in some places it is between 22 and 150 per mille. The bottom of Tuzla is covered with hydrogen sulfide healing mud. Its periphery is overgrown with reeds, where several species of birds prefer saline habitats. During the migration, flocks of ducks and whistlers stay in Shabla Tuzla. Where: 5 km northeast of the town of Shabla. The best time for visits is between April and October

### 1.1.5. Tyulenovo



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>



Source: частни фотографии

The old name of the village is Kalach Kyoi or "Village of the sword" and comes from the Gagauz population in the region.

In 1942 the village changed its name to Tyulenovo due to the presence of seal herds that sheltered in the local caves and rocks. Unfortunately, no seals have been seen in the area for years.

The unique coast of Tyulenovo village is located a few km from Shabla, 30 km from the border with Romania crossing Durankulak and 80 km from Varna. Near Tyulenovo some of the most beautiful places on our Black Sea coast are located. Here everyone will find something favorite - lovers of extreme experiences - scuba diving or rock climbing; romantics - places of solitude and exciting sunrises; fishermen; nature lovers - rare representatives of flora and fauna, fresh air and crystal clear sea water. Tyulenovo is a place almost untouched by civilization, beautiful and untamed. The height of the beach reaches 30 m, and each place has its own name - Dupkata, Martina, Kipriata, Ashalaka, Kanarata, Samotnika. The impressive shapes of the local rocks are the result of the parallel destructive sea abrasion and the karst process.

#### 1.1.6. Bolata

Bolata is an area located on the same bay and is part of Kaliakra reserve. It is located in the northern part of the Bulgarian Black Sea coast near the village of Balgarevo. The area is a wetland of great importance for several rare flora and fauna species.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

The cracks and niches in the local rocks offer excellent living conditions for the local bats and their terrestrial rodent counterparts - the small and white-bellied white-

toothed and the gray vole. More than 178 species of birds nest or pass their way to the shores of Africa. The caves around Bolata have been inhabited by humans since 400 BC. Here the only sandy beach is in the area of Kaliakra. Since 2013, the bay is a full member of "The most beautiful bays in the world" club.

### 1.1.7. Kamen Bryag and Yailata

The old name of Kamen Bryag (Stone shore) is Kaya Bey Kyoi or "The Village of the Stone Lord". The name comes from the lonely rock Malkata Yaila on the beach in front of the village. The Yailata area, located about 2 km from Kamen Bryag, is dotted with remnants of ancient civilizations. Here are many stone dwellings, a Thracian altar, an early Byzantine fortress wall and a large necropolis of Scythian tombs. The name Yaila is of Turkish origin and in Bulgarian means "high pasture". The cave dwellings on the the reserve are over 101. Over 120 are the burial facilities in the open three necropolises, carved in the rocky plain plateau or in the vertical slopes.

### 1.1.8. Kaliakra Kape



Source: private photographs

The shore at Cape Kaliakra is of cliff type, and the steep sheer cliffs are over 70 meters high. The rocks composition is of limestone, fused with clay, rich in iron oxides, which give their typical red colour. The earliest traces of human life in these places date back to the 4th century BC, when the area was inhabited by the Thracian

tribe Tirizi. They also gave its first name - Tirizis. The name Kaliakra in Greek means "beautiful nose". The most famous legend is about the 40 Bulgarian girls who tied their hairs together and threw themselves into the sea so as not to fall into the hands of the Ottoman enslavers. One of them was Kaliakra, after whom the nose is named. Now at the beginning of Cape Kaliakra there is an obelisk called the "Gate of the 40 Maidens" in their memory.

Kaliakra is the only reserve in Bulgaria, which includes protected marine waters. This is one of the first protected areas in Bulgaria, declared a nature reserve in 1941. The high rocky cape Kaliakra, like a ship, steps 2 km into the sea and closes sheltered from the north winds bay.

This beautiful place, inaccessible on three sides, was inhabited by the Thracians. They erected a stone wall from the north to block the only access to the promontory. They named the fortress Tirizis, after the name of their tribe - Tiriz. During the Roman era, the fortress became known as Accra (from Acros Castle - "fortified cape"). In the Roman province of Little Scythia (Dobrudzha) Accra second biggest and important center after Tommy (Constanța) and Dionysopolis (Balchik).

In the 6th century the Byzantines built a new, even more powerful fortress wall and placed a large garrison here. The city had a large and wealthy population. After 681, the Bulgarians conquered the fortress and expanded the fortified area by building another fortress wall to the north. In the 13th century, the fortress appeared under the name Kaliakra in some Italian nautical charts, which in Greek means "beautiful cape".

When in the 14th century the Second Bulgarian State was divided into three, Kaliakra became the center of the easternmost part, whose first ruler was Balik boyar. Eastern Bulgaria received his name Dobrudzha and Kaliakra experienced its flourishing as its capital under the rule of Despot Dobrotitsa, who was the son-in-law of the Byzantine Empress Anna of Savoy.

The son of Despot Dobrotitsa's - Ivanko, succeeded in concluding a treaty of mutual trade privileges with the Italian Republic of Genoa. Kaliakra became a major international trading port, as evidenced by the numerous finds of Western European

coins. Kaliakra retained its independence until 1444 and was the last Bulgarian fortress conquered by the Ottomans.

In 2004, team of archaeologists led by B. Petrunova during excavations between the walls of the ancient and medieval fortress, came across a stone masonry tomb from the III century of the Scythian tribe Sarmatians. Two Bulgarians were buried above the Sarmatian grave. The Bulgarians came to these places in the 7th century.

At the beginning of the VI century the fortress of Accra was inhabited by Huns and Bulgarians. They were federates (allies) of the Byzantine Empire with the task of guarding its borders.

In 513, the federations revolted against Emperor Anastasius. He tried to bribe the rebel leader Vitilian, but failed. Then he sent an army against them, but it was defeated in front of the walls of Accra. According to chroniclers, the fortress trenches were filled with the corpses of imperial soldiers. In order to be defeated the Byzantines spread the legend that the Bulgarian shamans caused a sudden darkness, from which the soldiers were horrified and like mad, threw themselves into the trenches.

Kaliakra is a narrow rocky peninsula situated 12 km from Kavarna and 60 km northeast of Varna Cape, stretching to the south about 2 km inland.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

The most inaccessible is the steep east coast, subjected to the destructive force of the powerful surf caused by strong northeast winds. Despite the hardness of the rocks, the sea undermines the foundations of the shore slowly but steadily, forming ditches, abrasion niches and caves. When they lose their support (especially in earthquakes, large rock blocks collapse into the sea, so the shore retreats to land and becomes steeper and more inaccessible. The devil's current coming from the north carries the finer material and deposits it in the quiet bays of the south coast.

The west coast of Kaliakra is steep, with many cave openings. It is humid, protected from the cold northeast winds, so it is overgrown with small groves of wild figs - here is their northernmost border in our country. The surface of the peninsula is flat (it is part of the Dobrudzha plateau), rocky and strongly karstic.

In 1980, a 500-meter-wide sea strip was added to the reserve and is the only protected water area on the Bulgarian coast so far. The reserve is the only one in which relict steppe species (small iris, narrow-leaved peony, hybrid poppy, etc.) and some endemics such as the Kaliakren squash are preserved. Rare and valuable birds nest on Cape Kaliakra - black angelfish, pink starling and owl.

Here is the only nesting place of the middle cormorant, and until recently the moats at the foot of the promontory were a refuge for a monk seal, living only on the Black Sea coast. Cape Kaliakra ends with a vertical slope, 70 m high. It is built of limestone and conglomerates, painted purple due to the rocks saturated with iron oxides.

### 1.1.9. The Antique Temple on Durankulak Lake

The largest prehistoric site on the Balkan Peninsula is being explored on the Big Island in Durankulak Lake.



Source: <https://bulgariatravel.bg>

The remains of stone buildings found here, scientists refer to the early Eneolithic (4750-4500 BC) and define them as the earliest stone architecture in Europe. The only two-storey stone temple in the Balkans from the 5th millennium BC was discovered.

The largest prehistoric necropolis in the world has been discovered on the coast, opposite the island.

The studied 1200 graves testify that the necropolis was used for a long time - during the Neolithic and Eneolithic, and continuously by the same population. This means that it has experienced many years of peaceful labor and peaceful social development.

Rich in funeral gifts are mostly men's funerals. The gifts were special funerary pottery, ornaments of marble and mussels, and in the late Eneolithic - of copper and gold. The differences in the funeral gifts showed the existence of a pronounced property and social stratification of the society of that time.

No bones were found in a significant number of the graves, but only clay anthropomorphic figurines and funeral gifts typical of other burials. These are probably cenotaphs - symbolic graves of people who died far from their settlement. Their number increased towards the end of the 5th millennium BC, which probably means that many of the inhabitants of the settlement died during the war.

The men were laid in the graves on their backs, with their limbs outstretched, and the women and children in a hawker pose. Small clay cups were found in front of the

mouths of the buried, probably from the funeral rite. In the earliest graves were found bones of wild animals, specially broken clay vessels, stone tools. In later burials the number of pottery increases.

Subsequently, the inhabitants of the village abandoned the custom of placing animal bones in the graves, and instead placed axes, hoes and other tools made of horn, as well as "sewing kits" - e.g. flint scraper, bone awl, trowel, mussel shell. The first ornaments of copper and gold appeared in these graves.

The big island in Lake Durankulak has been explored since 1974. At the end of the 5th millennium BC. life on the island ended abruptly and was briefly restored only in 3,200 BC, during the Bronze Age. A fortified settlement from the 18th century BC, a cave temple of Kibela, a Bulgarian settlement from the 9th-10th century have been discovered here. The island and its adjacent territories are included in the Black Sea Archaeological Park "Durankulak"

#### 1.1.10. Yailata - unknown wild fascination

Yailata area is a unique corner of our Black Sea coast, still unknown for many Bulgarians. It is located northeast of Bird Bay, between Cape Shabla and the majestic Cape Kaliakra.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

Yailata is a large terraced landslide with a length of about 2 km. The three clearly separated and different in size landslide steps are huge fault rock blocks, sliding to the sea on the surface of a sloping layer of clay. Their upper flattened parts have sunk to the land, and to the sea they are separated from each other by steep, almost vertical slopes. The lowest main step is with the greatest length (about 1300 m) and width (about 200 m). In its vertical limestone rocks the surf has modeled many water caves (Tyulenovata, Sinyata, Galabovata, etc.), whose bases lie about 8 m below sea level.

Yailata is inaccessible on all sides, except for a few difficult paths between the rocks, and has retained its wild charm. From early spring to late autumn the terraced areas are overgrown with dense grass vegetation. Yailata is inconspicuous when wild irises and peonies, poppies, wheatgrass, daisies, etc. bloom. The population in this area calls the pastures "yaila", hence the name of the place.

Yailata is home to many animals - foxes, rabbits, hedgehogs, turtles, lizards, snakes. For seabirds it is a real paradise. The caves are inhabited by cave pigeons, bats and various invertebrates, and in the sea waters there are still large fish - turbot, leper, mullet, sea cat, etc. There are about 40 caves, many rock peaks and niches on the rocks of Yaila at different heights. The coast is dotted with numerous rock blocks and cliffs.

The natural protection of Yaila has attracted people since ancient times. Archaeological excavations in the caves have revealed valuable finds and materials from different historical epochs. Of particular interest are the rock tombs. The earliest are from 8000 years ago. For the protection of Yailata as an extremely rich archeological monument in 1989 it was declared an archeological reserve.

It is situated 18 km from the town of Kavarna.

#### 1.1.11. The Temple of Holy Mother - Kibela in Balchik

In April 2007, during construction work in Balchik, the excavator came across a rectangular antique building. The excavations reveal the best preserved temple of

Cybele - the Great Mother of the Gods. The building has an area of 93.5 sq.m. and refers to the 280-260 BC.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

Almost all the statues found are of Cybele. She is dressed in a long chiton and himation, sits on a throne and holds a tympanum in her left hand. In four of the statuettes found, a lion lay in the lap of the goddess. The goddess of the main statue in the temple is dressed in a long chiton with a himation slung over her left shoulder and lap and is seated on a throne, but in her right hand she holds a phial, and in her left, carried aside, she probably held a scepter. The lion is not in her lap, but is depicted as a relief - squatting on the right side of the throne.

27 completely or almost completely preserved inscriptions and several smaller fragments were found in the temple. All but one of the texts are in Greek. The earliest inscriptions are from the 3rd century BC. The latest text, and the only one in Latin, dates to the first quarter of the 4th century. An inscription from 1st century informs of a rich donation, including the dedication of statues and reliefs, the decoration of the sanctuary and the erection of a covered colonnade.

The temple was also donated properties, vineyards, workshops and buildings, which were rented out and with the proceeds the holidays of the goddess were organized. We also learn about the presence of temple slaves, as well as an archive of documents, where all donations are recorded in detail. The longest decree is dedicated to the Thracian Mokaporis, appointed by King Remetalk I as a strategist who assisted Dionysopolis in peacetime and in war "against common enemies beyond the Danube".

Among the documents found in the temple are lists of Cybele's priests and ministers. The religious association celebrated her cult on the first of each month. The main feast of Cybele was celebrated by the polis in the month of Tavreon. From an inscription we learn about another of her holidays, in which only women participated. They collected flowers, organized a procession and performed sacrifices.

The temple was destroyed several times. It was burnt down in 378, along with dozens of other settlements in Moesia and Scythia, plundered by the Goths, who two years earlier had settled in these areas as Roman federations. This is confirmed by the latest coins found under a layer of coal and broken tiles in the nave. The figures of the emperors Valentinian I (364-375) and Valens (364-378) are put over them. After this pogrom, the temple was not rebuilt. In the 5th or 6th century a significant part of the building was demolished to the level at which it has been preserved to this day. In 544-545 the temple was hit by a sea wave and covered with earth, which slipped from the northeast. Natural disaster has sealed the temple and, like ancient Pompei, has preserved it to present.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, where today is the town of Balchik, the prosperous town of Kruni was founded inhabited by Greeks, Thracians and Scythians. One day, a stormy sea threw a statue of the god Dionysus ashore. This deeply impressed its inhabitants and they renamed the city Dionysopolis. In the 1st century Dionysopolis was within the boundaries of the Roman province of Lower Moesia. Since the end of the 3rd century it has been one of the main cities of the province of Scythia. But in the middle of the 6th century Dionysopolis was destroyed by a terrible natural disaster. According to the Byzantine chronicler Theophanes the Confessor, in 544-545 the sea rose and entered 3-4 km inland near the cities of Odessos (Varna), Dionysopolis and Aphrodision (an ancient city on the coast, 4 km north of Balchik).

### 1.1.12. Aladja monastery

It is among the most famous rock monasteries in our country. His name is unknown. They called the place "Aladja" (from Turkish "colorful") because of the frescoes in the rock caves.



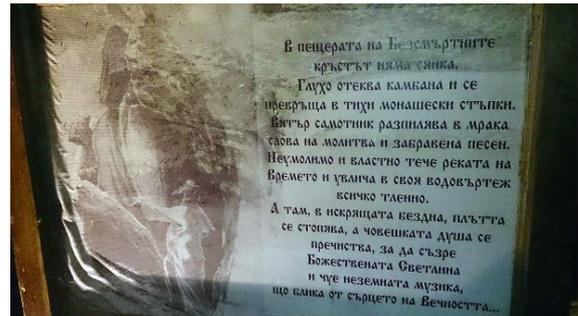
Project funded by the  
EUROPEAN UNION



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

The first Bulgarian archaeologists, the Shkorpil brothers, started the systematic research of the complex at the end of the 19th century. At their insistence and after the establishment of Varna Archaeological Society in 1912, Aladzha Monastery was declared a national antiquity.

It is believed that as early as the 4th and 5th centuries there were monks here. Legend has it that the first inhabitants were a few aristocrats expelled from Rome for their Christian faith. In the 9th-10th century, after the adoption of Christianity as the official religion in our country, the first monastic fraternity of Bulgarian monks was formed here.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

In 12th century the monastery complex was completed and became one of the most important centers in Northeastern Bulgaria. In the 13th and 14th centuries, the monastery was closely associated with hesychasm - a branch of Christianity that preached reaching God through hermitage and asceticism.

Common borders. Common solutions.

The monastery complex is on several levels. The cells, the monastery kitchen, the dining room and the small chapel are located on the lowest level. The premises were separated by wooden partitions. The monastery church is on the second level. It had a wooden iconostasis that has not been preserved.

Some of the frescoes in the altar are preserved. Two layers are clearly distinguished - the first one from the 11th to the 12th century and the second one from the 13th to the 14th century. The monastery is located in soft limestone rocks, which reach 40 m in height. Stone stairs connected the cells with the church on the upper level. At the level of the cells was a small crypt in which the dead were laid. After 7 years, their bones were removed and transferred to the ossuary in the Catacombs area about 500 meters from the monastery. At the end of the 14th century and the beginning of the 15th century, after the conquest of Bulgaria by the Turks, life in the monastery gradually died down. Today the complex is a cultural monument and has been turned into a museum.

During the summer season, twice a week, an audio-visual show is shown in the evening, which tells the story of the monastery.

During the greatest spread of hesychasm in our country in the 13th-14th centuries, Aladzha Monastery was part of a community of about 500 rock monasteries in Northeastern Bulgaria. There is a rock monastery near the village of Nevsha, Varna region, with about 40 cells. Crosses and figures are carved in the bases. About 20 km from Provadia was opened another monastery with 9 cells on three levels. 20 km from it, in the village of Royak, in the wooded area of Geneviz, there are dozen monasteries carved into the rock crown. There was found a rock church with inscriptions on the east wall of the vestibule. Mention is made of the founding of a monastery and the names of Mikhail-Assen (1246-1256), son of Ivan Assen II, and Ivan Alexander.

General information about the monastery: Aladzha Monastery Rock Monastery, 12th century, inactive, cultural monument, museum.

Aladja is situated 14 km east of Varna.

### 1.1.13. St St. Konstantin and Elena Monastery

The monastery of St. St. Constantine and Elena was founded among centuries-old dense forests near Varna. In 1908 a sanatorium for tuberculosis patients was built next to it. The sanatorium became so famous that the famous resort complex "St. St. Constantine and Helena", named after the monastery. The first written information about the monastery is from the end of the 18th century. The famous Russian traveler Viktor Teplyakov mentioned it in his book "Letters from Bulgaria".



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

During the Russian-Turkish War between the years 1828-1829 the monastery was destroyed. Few years later it was restored thanks to the efforts of the two brothers Theodosius and Agapius Kantardjievi from Tarnovo. Under their care, the monastery became a prosperous monastery, a center of active social and spiritual life. The monastery supported the establishment of schools in the surrounding villages, supported the construction of churches and helped poor people. Until 1870, when the Bulgarian Exarchate was established, Varna was the seat of the Greek metropolitan and the official liturgical language was Greek. However, the monastery always served in Bulgarian. The monastery was renovated in 1972. Then the beautiful carved wooden iconostasis and the hierarch's throne were made.

The dome of the church is lined with wood during the last renovation of the complex. The church is made of stone, dug into the ground and without frescoes. In its altar behind the holy throne, springs healing water, with which the monastery is known since its founding. The altar is the main, eastern part of the Orthodox church, where the clergy perform sacraments. It is separated from the rest of the temple by an iconostasis. The holy throne and the altar are in it.

Iliton (silk tablecloth), Antimins (ritual cloth with the image of the burial of Christ), gift box, obscene cross and Holy Gospel are placed on the holy throne. The holy throne symbolizes the tomb of Christ, so the relics of a saint are placed in its foundations.

According to legends, in the 14th century several monks hid from the Turks in the dense beech forests near Varna. On a tree they saw an icon of St. St. Constantine and Helena. They interpreted this as a sign and founded a monastery of the same name. The found icon is still in the monastery today.

"St. St. Constantine and Helena " is situated 9 km from Varna, in the center of the resort "St.St. Constantine and Helena ".

#### 1.1.14. The Antique Odessos in Varna

Among the most representative monuments of ancient architecture are the Roman baths in the ancient city of Odessos in modern Varna.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

Visiting public baths (Thermae) was part of the daily life of Roman citizens. The bathroom was a large complex not only for bathing, but also for recreation and entertainment, where visitors spent hours. There they could play sports, meet and have political conversations, or discuss city gossip with friends, make deals, and even eat.

The thermal baths of Odessos occupied an area over 7000 sq.m. The rectangular building, about 20 meters high, had two official entrances. Wide and comfortable staircases led to the vestibules. From them one entered the locker rooms (apoditeria), where visitors left their clothes and jewelry in storage, under the watchful eye of a special slave. The numerous rooms of the thermal baths were to provide the visitors not only with conveniences, but also with pleasure for the spirit. The baths and halls were decorated with marble tiles, columns and statues, with colorful mosaics of dolphin-shaped fountains. Cold and hot water gushed from the spouts of numerous fountains. In the galleries around the baths there were shops that offered a variety of goods. The visitor went through several baths: frigidarium - for bathing with cold water, tepidarium - for bathing with hot water, caldarium - pools with hot water, latrina - toilet.

The most beautiful in the Odessa baths was the big hall (palaestra). Here the visitors met, talked, played sports. In the palaestra there was a statue of the senior Odessa magistrate Calvdius Aquila - organizer of the great sports games (Darzalei), dedicated to the Thracian god Darzalas, patron saint of Odessos. Statues of the Roman gods Victoria and Mercury were found during the excavations. Next to the baths there was a sanctuary of the health deities Asclepius and Hygia. Not forgotten was the hero Heracles, who, in addition to his exploits, was famous as the patron saint of springs. Archaeological excavations of the baths, conducted in 1959-1971, under the leadership of M. Mirchev, are difficult - as in any modern city, some of the ancient buildings here are under existing buildings. However, researchers have managed to restore the appearance of this public building as much as possible. During the research it was established that the baths were built at the end of the 2nd century and operated until the end of the 3rd century. Their architectural plan is reminiscent of the baths built by Emperor Caracalla in Rome. Some of the ruins have long risen above the surface of modern terrain and were known among the people of Varna as the "Roman Tower".

The Shkorpil brothers are credited with preserving this antiquity, as they believed that the remains were from an early Byzantine building.

#### 1.1.15. The Antique terracotta in Bulgaria

The word terracotta originates from Italian means "baked earth". This is the name of a type of ceramics - art products made of red-brown baked clay without glaze.



Source: Archaeological Museum - Varna

The production of terracotta figures dates back to ancient times, but its heyday came in the V-III century BC in the cities along the Mediterranean coast of Asia Minor and the nearby islands. The first workshops for production of terracotta products in the Bulgarian lands appeared in Odessos (Varna), Apollonia (Sozopol), Messambria (Nessebar). During the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the production of terracotta grew enormously and its use was widespread. Statuettes of the revered gods stood in the home altars and in the sanctuaries. Clay objects were used as funeral and votive offerings. Terracotta was even used to make toys.

The masters often modeled from clay miniature copies of famous sculptures. This gives us an idea of poorly preserved and extinct works of famous sculptors of antiquity. For example, in the Archaeological Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (in Sofia) there is a figure of the goddess Artemis, 80 cm high, which recreates an original Greek marble sculpture. The legend recorded by the Roman writer Pliny the Elder tells that one day, the daughter of the potter Butard, from the coastal Greek city of Sinope, sent her beloved one on a long journey. Her grief was so great that she outlined his silhouette in his shadow and fell on the dusty road. Her father made a clay figurine out of the outline, baked it in the oven, and gave it to his daughter to comfort her. From written sources we learn the names of two famous masters of terracotta in the VII century BC. "Rexos and Toedoris of Samos".

### 1.1.16. The Ancient City Marcianopolis in Devnya

Marcianopolis, repeatedly mentioned in written monuments, originated in 106 at the sources of the Devnya River. At the end of the 1st century and the beginning of the 2nd century, Marcianopolis became a large military, administrative and cultural center, as evidenced by the coins minted in the city. The city flourished in the III-IV century, when for some time it was the capital of a Roman province and an episcopal center.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

The fate of Marcianopolis is full of drama. Falling under the blows of the Gothic invasions in the 4th century, it was burned and looted, and later rebuilt. In the 5th century, however, it was again conquered and destroyed - this time by the Huns. In 614-615 the inhabitants completely abandoned the city due to the constant invasions of Avars and Slavs. At the end of the 7th century the proto-Bulgarians founded a settlement in the ruins of Marcianopolis.

The ruins of the ancient city are located below the present town of Devnya, Varna region. The earliest archeological excavations were carried out by Heinrich Hartl, a professor at the University of Vienna, Austria. He also drew the first plan of the city.

Some of the buildings of Marcianopolis have been studied by Karel Shkorpil. Archaeological excavations have uncovered fortress walls, necropolises, churches, residential and public buildings decorated with magnificent mosaics. Among the finds are two sundials that not only measured time, but also indicated the winter and summer solstices and the equinox.

Among the archaeologists' findings is a floor mosaic depicting the Gorgon-Medusa. Roman and early Byzantine mosaics found during the excavations of Marcianopolis are exhibited in the Museum of Mosaics in Devnya. The mosaic "Satyr and Antiope" represents the nymph Antiope and her seduction by the god Zeus. The plot is extremely rare among the mosaics preserved from that time. Marcianopolis is one of the largest coin treasures in the world. It was discovered in 1929 in Devnya, when two large clay vessels for storing grain were excavated. The vessels were filled with Roman silver coins from the 1st century BC to the 3rd century. The total number of coins discovered was over 100 000. There is no doubt that this treasure was a state treasury. In case of danger, it was buried in the cellar of a simple building, apparently so as not to arouse suspicion that there may be a hidden state treasure in it.

Rome was once ruled by Emperor Mark Ulpius Trajan. Once his sister Marciana wanted to row a pot of water from the Potamos River with a golden vessel, but unwittingly dropped it. The vessel sank instantly, but soon resurfaced. This was a real sign and the emperor decided to build a city here, which he named Marciana. Such is the legend of Marcianopolis, recorded by the Gothic historian Jordanes.

Marcianopolis is situated in Devnya, 25 km from Varna, Bulgaria.

### 1.1.17. The Standing Stones

The beautiful legend refers to the natural phenomenon Pobitite kamani /Standing Stones or Stone Forest/, also called Kamennata gora and Dikilitash. It is located 15 km from Varna, not far from the Devnya district "Povelyanovo" north of Lake Beloslav. The natural phenomenon has no analogue in the whole world. Within a radius of 50

square kilometers you can see different sculptural groups of different sizes, but the "Stone Forest" is the central and is an international tourist site. The broken stones are an ensemble of stone columns, up to 10 m high. They are in the shape of a cylinder, a truncated cone, solid or hollow rock blocks and many pieces of stone. The formations, which originated more than 50 million years ago, are known as a sacred place.

### **The Standing Stones - "The Heart"**

Geologists from all over the world came here to unravel the mystery of the Stone Forest. There are about 15 official hypotheses about the origin of rock sculptures. They were first documented in 1829 by the correspondent to the army of the Russian general Dibich - the Muscovite Viktor Teplyakov. He called them "Gebedje ruins" after the nearby village of Gebedje, today Beloslav. The natural phenomenon "Pobiti kamani", also known as "Kamennata gora" - The Stone Forest and "Dikilitash", is located on an area of 7 sq. km, about 18-20 km from Varna and a few kilometers from Beloslav. The natural landmark is an ensemble of stone columns, up to 10 m high, hollow or solid cylinders, truncated cones, different in shape and size rock blocks and many pieces of stone scattered throughout the complex.

They were declared a natural landmark in 2002.

For thousands of years, nature has sculpted the pieces of stone to turn them into impressive sculptures resembling people, animals, monsters, mythical creatures. "Stone Guards", "Camel", "Throne", "Stone Forest" are the names of some of these natural sculptures.

The most famous and attractive for tourists is the ensemble "Dikilitashka group". It is located about 18 km west of Varna and is easily accessible by highway E70. The complex consists of over 300 columns of different sizes, located in a strip measuring 850m x 120m and about 50 structures in a smaller patch to the south. Some of the columns are broken in two or three parts, others lie on the ground as if torn from their places and form interesting sculptural groups.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

### 1.1.18. The Fortress in Byala - throughout antique wineries

Many fortresses have been discovered in the Bulgarian lands. Most of them have similar buildings, towers, wells and temples, partially or completely preserved to this day. In the newly opened for visitors in the spring of 2014 fortress in the town of Byala, in addition to all this, you have the rare opportunity to walk around an ancient winery.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

The Late Antique Fortress is located on St. Atanas Cape in the town of Byala. Its location is such that a beautiful view of the sea and the coast to the left and right is spread in front of your eyes.



Source: частни фотографии

It was more than a fortress - a whole port city was located here, whose life visitors can imagine thanks to the huge colorful panels with scenes from the past. The picture is complemented by several very well-preserved parts of the city.

During the excavations many of the important buildings for a city were found in the fortress - a central street with shops, studios and pubs, three ancient wineries, a public bath, kilns for the production of ceramic vessels, a church complex, residential buildings.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

Common borders. Common solutions.

The fact that three wineries were opened in the town means that the locals were mainly engaged in vineyards and wine production (apart from shipping and trade with the ships arriving here). One of the wineries is best preserved, where you can see a model of an antique wooden device for crushing grapes.

The city bath is also well preserved, which in antiquity was used not only for bathing but also for treatment, exchange of gossip, dispute resolution, concluding deals and small outpatient trade. One of the most impressive parts of the fortress in Byala is undoubtedly the Basilica.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

Although only part of it has been restored - few columns, part of the altar and the altar table - you can get an idea of what the place looked like in antiquity and enjoy the beautiful view from the edge of Cape St. Athanasius. In addition to the basilica, religious buildings were found: the bishop's residence, two baptisteries, as well as a sacred well and a building for storing gifts.

The fortress of Cape St. Athanasius is located in the town of Byala, on the very shore by the cape. It is open every day from 10 am to 8 pm (during winter it closes earlier). Admission is BGN 5, for students and retirees - BGN 2, for children up to 7 years - free.

### 1.1.19. The Tomb in Sveshtari

In 1982 in Ginina Mogila, near the village of Sveshtari, near Isperih, was made one of the most sensational discoveries of Bulgarian archeology in the XX century. A Thracian tomb with unique architecture and decoration was discovered, which ranks it in the UNESCO Heritage List.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

The tomb is built of large limestone blocks and consists of a dromos (corridor) and three square rooms (entrance hall, and two chambers), each covered with a separate vault. The ruler of the Thracian tribe Getae who ruled his kingdom in the second quarter of the III century BC and his wife were buried in the tomb near Sveshtari. There are two stone beds in the central chamber. The larger one is intended for the funeral bed of the ruler, the smaller one - for his beloved wife, who was to follow him in the afterlife. The deceased's favorite horses were placed in the side chamber and in front of the entrance to the vestibule.

The burial chamber has an extremely rich decoration. The three sides of the room are shaped like a colonnade, but instead of columns, the cornice is placed on ten female figures with raised hands, called caryatids. Above them is a mural depicting a religious procession and the rite of heroization - the deification of the deceased

ruler, who receives a golden wreath from the hands of a goddess wearing a long robe. Remains of sacrificial pits and hearths have been excavated in the embankment of the mound, which testify that complex burial rites were performed during the erection of the mound. The rich decoration and perfect architecture of the tomb emphasize the political power of the ruler for whom it was built.

The tomb in Sveshtari is part of the Sbornovo National Historical and Archaeological Reserve. It is located in the valley of the river Krapinec, between the villages of Porovets and Sveshtari, in municipality of Ispirih. More than 140 archeological monuments from the prehistoric era (V-IV century BC) to the late Middle Ages are located on the territory of the reserve. Among them are the Necropolis in the area of the Singer's Fields, the Thracian sanctuary in the area of Kamen Rid, Demir Baba Teke, the Cult Complex in the area of New Roots, the Thracian city, which is supposed to be Helis - the capital of the Goth ruler Dromichet

#### 1.1.20. Pliska - the First Bulgarian Capital

The remains of the first Bulgarian capital are located in a vast plain, not far from Madara plateau.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

After the victory of the Bulgarians over the Byzantine troops, in the battle of Ongala in 681, the ruler's court and the core of the army moved to the Pliska field. The new camp, like the camp in the Danube Delta, had a trapezoidal shape and was protected by an earthen rampart nearly 10 meters high and an equally deep moat in front of it. In the middle of the vast fortified territory (23.5 sq.m), behind a double palisade (wooden fence), were the buildings of the Khan's yard. They were made of wood, so today only the beds of the vertical structures can be found. Traces of three yurts have been found on these beds. It is the earliest and largest, probably the first representative building in Pliska.

At the end of the 8th century or at the very beginning of the 9th century a huge palace of cut stone was built, tentatively called the Palace by the archaeologists Krumov. It was also fortified with a double palisade, 6 m high. It surrounded an area of almost 300 acres and was crowned with a platform and ridges. Secret underground passages connected the palace with the fortification. The eastern gate of the stone fortress of Pliska has been partially restored. The fortress had the shape of an irregular quadrangle with an area of 440 decares. There were gates in the middle of its three walls, towers in its corners, and pentagonal ones along the walls.

In the year 811 the palace, the corridors and the wooden fortress were burned by Emperor Nicephorus I Genicus. The restored city acquired a new look. Stone fortress walls surrounded the so-called Inner city. An impressive Throne Hall was built in its center, and next to it - a palace complex, surrounded by a high brick wall, built on a stone foundation. In the palace complex there were houses for the ruler's family, a pagan sanctuary, baths and outbuildings. After converting to Christianity, Prince Boris the 1st built a small family church and built the capital's cathedral in the Outer City. In the outer city, behind the fortress wall, there were numerous settlements of farmers and craftsmen and palaces of some nobles. In 893 Tsar Simeon moved the capital to Veliki Preslav. Only the governor remained in Pliska, and ordinary people settled in the Inner City.

Pliska is marked on a map printed in Amsterdam in 1688. In 1767 it was mentioned by the German Carsten Niebuhr, who visited these places. In 1787 the ruins were seen by

Felix Kanitz, he suggested that these were the remains of an ancient city. Konstantin Irecek was the first to guess that it is possible that the ruins are of Pliska mentioned in the Byzantine sources from the 10th-11th century. However, the real discoverer of Pliska is Irecek's nephew - Karel Shkorpil. He also excavated the first stone buildings - the Throne Palace and the Great Basilica. Since then, archaeologists from different generations have been exploring Pliska and it continues to surprise them.

Pliska National Historical and Archaeological Reserve is located 3 km from Pliska and 28 km from Shumen, Bulgaria.

#### 1.1.21. Madara Horseman - the only rock relief in Europe

The only rock relief in Europe - the Madara Horseman, is located on the high rocks of the Madara Plateau, just a few kilometers from the first Bulgarian capital Pliska.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

The bas-relief, carved at a height of 23 m from the base of the rock, depicts a horseman, moving to the right, driving a spear into a fallen lion, and behind him runs a dog with a protruding tongue. Time has not spared the unique monument and the details are increasingly difficult to restore. Still, it is clear that the rider has long hair, is wearing wide pants, probably has a quiver with arrows on his back, and his leg is tucked into a stirrup.

Around the horseman there are three fairly destroyed by erosion, old Bulgarian inscriptions in Greek. The first one is about the relations between Khan Tervel and the Byzantine emperor Justinian II Rhinomet, the second one - about some actions of Khan Kormisosh (or Krum), and the third one - about the peace concluded by Khan Omurtag with an unknown ruler.

The Madara Horseman was discovered in 1872 by Felix Kanitz. Since then, there has been a constant debate in science about what the relief depicts. Time and nature have damaged the image.

The reason for contradictions is that there are no such monuments, which makes comparisons difficult. Some researchers consider Madara horseman to be a Thracian deity - the horseman Heros, Darzalas or Artemis-Bendida. There is even a hypothesis that it is an image of the Persian king Darius. Other scientists convinced the theory that one of the Bulgarian khans - Asparuh, Tervel, Krum or Omurtag - was immortalized on the rock. According to the latest assumptions, the relief depicts the hero-horseman from the mythology of the steppe peoples, among whom are the proto-Bulgarians.

It is also suggested that their celestial god Tangra may have been carved into the rocks. However, it is indisputable that the relief from Madara was carved after the 7th century and judging by the inscriptions, it is the work of one of the khans of Danube Bulgaria.

Madara horseman raises many questions to which scientists still do not have a definite answer. For example, why there is no title "khan" or "archon" (this is how the Greek-speaking people called the Bulgarian rulers) on the first inscription next to the name of Khan Tervel). Why did the Rider, the victor of the lion, remain the only monument of its kind for nearly two centuries of paganism? Why in the lands ruled by the Bulgarians in the Middle Ages, no monuments with the plot "a horseman accompanied by a dog kills a lion" were found at all? If the relief is a monument to the pagan cult, why was it not destroyed after the baptism, when all the sanctuaries of the old deities were demolished?

### 1.1.22. The Round church near Veliki Preslav

The round church is one of the architectural masterpieces of the First Bulgarian state and is among the most beautiful temple buildings not only in Bulgaria but also in Europe during the Early Middle Ages.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

The temple is a complex two-storey building consisting of three parts: atrium, narthex and main room - a ship (Greek nave). The walls of the atrium (large rectangular courtyard with a colonnade) consist of connected semicircular niches (exedra) and a number of columns in front of the connections between them. The atrium led to the narthex, a rectangular vestibule with two round towers on the side and four columns on the inside.

From the narthex, through three monumental arched gates, one entered the ship, which is round, with a diameter of 10.5 m. Its wall is divided into 12 semicircular exedra with marble columns between them. The columns carried the gallery to the second floor and supported the double hemispherical dome. A pulpit rose in the middle of the round nave, from which the palace priests delivered their sermons. In one of the niches there are traces of the attachment of some device - perhaps the royal throne or canteen (a special table for infusions).

In the 1980s, the grave of a young princess was found on the floor at this location. The temple was rich in carved marble slabs and cornices, with painted ceramic tiles

and glass mosaics. The inner dome was lined with multicolored mosaics on a gold background, and the outer probably had rich gilding that shone in the distance and may have given the name of the Golden Church. The floor looked like a colorful carpet because of the mosaic of colored marbles arranged in geometric compositions.

The sings of the gold encrusted crosses are preserved on two of the columns. The Golden Church differs from all other temples built by the rulers of the First Bulgarian Kingdom in the 9th-10th centuries. It has an atrium, like the cathedral basilicas, and a round nave - similar to some ancient mausoleums. The magnificent decoration suggests that the church was a family temple of King Simeon. The remains of this exceptional monument of Bulgarian architecture are located on a picturesque terrace not far from the South Gate of the Inner City of Veliki Preslav. They were discovered in 1919 by the Preslav teacher Yordan Gospodinov, who knew from his father's memories that Turks extracted marble from the low mound to bake lime. The precious stone decoration of the church has disappeared almost entirely in their furnaces.

The round church is the only monument of an old Bulgarian church construction, for which a written source may have reached us. In a Russian book, an undoubted copy of the Preslav blacksmith (i.e. monk) Tudor, according to which in 907 Prince Simeon built a "holy golden new church" at the mouth of the Ticha. However, after the opening of the great royal cathedral at the throne palace, this hypothesis can be reconsidered.

## 1.2. SouthEastern Bulgaria

### With a scent of Strandzha and the sea

Summer is in full swing and the soul longs for the sea. When a person decides to go to the Southern Bulgarian Black Sea Coast after three and a half hours on the highway Sofia - Burgas he is already on sea territory. In front of the eye stretches Burgas Lake - the largest natural lake in the country, which is home to many birds - herons,

pelicans, geese and more. A stop on the road in the direction of Ahtopol is to admire the bird world. To reach the lake, one has to make his way through paths overgrown with rubbish, but the access to the bird world is worth it.

### 1.2.1. St. George the Victorious in Pomorie

Christianity appeared relatively early in Anhialo (today Pomorie), as in most settlements on the Black Sea coast.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

A bishopric was established in the town as early as the 2nd century, and from the 5th to the 6th century it became the seat of an autocephalous archbishopric - a role it retained even during Turkish slavery. In these conditions it was quite natural to have a monastery in the city. It is believed that the monastery of St. George the Victorious was founded around the 7th century by Greek settlers.

In 812, Khan Krum captured the city and it became part of Bulgaria. After the adoption of Christianity as the official state religion in 864, Anhialo remained an archbishopric, but now with a Bulgarian archbishop. The famous Anchial Gospel of 1337 - a manuscript with the four Gospels, published by the Anchial writer Methodius Gemistus, is proof of the active literary activity in the city. The monastery was destroyed in the burning of Anhialo by the Venetian knights of the Savoy Count



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Amedei IV in 1366, or about a century later, in 1453, when the city finally fell under the rule of the Ottoman Empire.

Towards the end of the 18th century, Selim Bey settled in Anhialo. He was very rich, but he contracted an incurable disease. His brother Neno dreamed that a spring with healing water was flowing in the yard of the farm.

The peasant went and secretly excavated the place. He found a marble bas-relief of St. George and when he picked it up, a spring gushed from below. Selim Bey was indeed healed and as a token of gratitude he and his whole family accepted the Christian faith, built a small temple next to the spring, and Selim himself became the first abbot of the monastery. In 1856 the new church was built and very soon the holy monastery became the spiritual center of the area.



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Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

According to some sources, the name of city Anhialo comes from Greek and means "by the shallow sea", and according to others it is associated with the name of the ancient town of Ahelo, near the city of Miletus in Asia Minor. The first colonizers on the Black Sea coast came from Miletus and it is quite possible that they named the new colony of their hometown - a common practice in ancient times.

Pomorie Monastery "St. George the Victorious" was restored in the 19th century. It is an active, male and a temple holiday.

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### 1.2.2. Antique Domed Tomb in Pomorie



Source: <https://bulgariatravel.org>

The ancient domed tomb of Pomorie is located west of the town of Pomorie, near the road Pomorie - Bourgas. The tomb dates from the II - III century AD. It is believed that it served as a heroine (mausoleum) of a rich Anhial family, in which religious pagan rituals were performed.

The tomb consists of a corridor (dromos) with a length of 22 m and a round chamber with a diameter of 11.60 m and a height of 5.50 m. It is built of stone and bricks. The tomb is vaulted with a semi-cylindrical vault, in the center of which there is a hollow column with a diameter of 3.30 m which expands upwards and merges with the outer wall. From the inner wall of the hollow column was a spiral stone staircase that led to the surface of the mound. Along the ring wall of the tomb there are five niches in which the urns of the deceased were placed. The walls are believed to have been painted, but today visitors can only see traces of green plaster.

The tomb is the only one of its kind on the Balkan Peninsula. Its architecture and construction still impress with its perfect execution. Many architects from all over the world study the tomb to unravel the mystery of its mushroom-shaped dome.

### 1.2.3. The Museum of Salt in Pomorie

The only museum of salt not only in Bulgaria but also in Eastern Europe is located in the town of Pomorie, 20 km from Bourgas. It opened on September 7, 2002 and is

dedicated to the production of salt by solar evaporation of seawater. This method is known as "ancient Anchial technology".

The extraction of salt in the region of Pomorie is a livelihood that has fed the local people for centuries. According to historical sources, the salt pans in the region of Pomorie existed even before the founding of the town (around the 5th century BC). In ancient times, salt was an extremely valuable commodity - expensive and rare - and that is why it was called "white gold".

The Museum of Salt in Pomorie is a specialized open-air museum - visitors can see both the museum building and the 20 decares of salt pans adjacent to the museum, in which salt is still mined today. The salt pans are numerous pools separated from each other by wooden embankments. Salt is produced there by the same technology that was produced centuries ago. The museum exposition in the building presents the development of the ancient technology for salt extraction. Here you can see a rich collection of photographs from the early twentieth century and copies of documents from the period XV - XIX century, which tell about the production and trade of salt in the Bulgarian lands. Among the most interesting kits in the exhibition are authentic solar tools, such as wooden solar trolleys, oars and others.

In the museum building you can also watch films dedicated to salt production. Lake Pomorie, within which the salt pans and the museum are located, is a protected area. More than 200 species of birds have been found in the lake, and part of the Via Pontica bird migration route passes over it. There are built nature conservation islands, where colonies of river and maned terns, sabers and others nest.

Special cameras in the salt pans monitor the behavior of the birds, and visitors can watch the birds on screens in the museum building. Here you can buy additional information materials and souvenirs. The Salt Museum was opened in 2002, and its construction was carried out with the financial support of the European Union through the Phare program, in implementation of the projects "Everything for salt" and "Development of the Salt Museum in Pomorie as a completed site". It is located in the area of the old town - on the narrow strip between Pomorie Lake and the salt pans themselves.

Here, on an area of 20 acres, installations are exhibited and visitors can get acquainted live with all the technological operations of extraction of the famous Pomorie salt and lye, talk to the solariums, and thus feel the authentic atmosphere. In fact, salt production today is the same as it was in the past. The museum, which presents ancient Anihal salt technology, includes an exhibition hall furnished with the necessary modern audio and video equipment. A collection of old photos traces the production of sea salt from the early twentieth century to the present day. In addition, copies of Ottoman-Turkish documents from the 15th - 19th century are presented, which tell about the trade and administrative procedures of that time. The museum also has topographic maps from the 18th - 20th century. In addition, authentic tools and equipment such as wooden carts, rakes and other tools can be examined up close. And in the open, a restored part of the narrow-gauge line for transporting salt completes the museum exposition. And so - the technology practiced for more than 25 centuries consists of the following stages: successive passage of sea water from the sea to the lake and from there - its passage through several pools (pans) - in order to evaporate and increase the concentration of salt. The process ends with crystallization in the smaller salt pans, with sizes from 80 to 100 sq.m. In them, under the influence of the sun and the wind, the solarium masters turn the salt water into white crystalline salt. At the sight of the huge, dazzling white pyramids of salt, one quickly guesses why this product is often called the "white gold" of the planet".

Although modern industrial production provides it in abundance, in the past - salt was a rarity. That is why, in some places it had the value of gold. Since ancient times it has been the subject of economic and commercial transactions, a means of economic exchange, medicine or a symbol of good fortune. In ancient Greece, for example, the price of slaves was calculated by calculating their weight in salt. Roman soldiers received overheads so they could buy salt. The Romans loved to salt the vegetables they ate, and this led to the insertion of the Latin word for salt in the word for salad (in some Latin dialects, salata literally means salty).

Our language also has a lot of expressions emphasizing the meaning of salt. And if you want to learn more about the secrets of this valuable product for life on earth, do it here - in the Museum of Salt, included in the list of "100 national tourist sites".



Source: <https://bulgariatravel.org>

#### 1.2.4. Sv. Anastasia Monastery near Burgas

It is believed that the monastery of St. Anastasia was founded around 8th century, but the first reliable evidence of its existence is from two books from the late 14th century, which belonged to the monastery and are now in the Vatican Apostolic Library. The following data are from 16th century, when the monastery was mentioned in a file on land disputes with the Sozopol monastery "St. John the Baptist".



Source: <https://anastasia-island.com>

The monastery was destroyed several times by pirates, as well as during the final conquest of the Black Sea coast by the Turks in 1453. It was rebuilt in the 15-16th century. The monastery complex was completely renovated in the early 19th century with the funds of Hadji Matei - a shepherd from Kotel.

In 1925 the already empty building of the monastery was turned into a prison. Communist political prisoners are being held here. Therefore, after 1944, the island was renamed the "Bolshevik", and the monastery complex was turned into a Museum of the Revolution. Today the monastery is deserted and is taken care of by the people working at the nearby lighthouse.

As the monastery is on an island with quite high shores, the buildings are not surrounded by walls, as is usual for monastery complexes. Fragments of frescoes are preserved in the church. Most of its decorations were destroyed when the monastery was turned into a prison. The wooden iconostasis, made during the last renovation of the church in 1802, was carved by a Bulgarian master, but is very different from the iconostasis of that time. It has elements typical for the Western European art. A legend tells that Anastasia lived during the time of the Roman emperor Decius (201-251). She was born into a family of noble Roman citizens, but at the age of 3 she became an orphan. She was raised by Sofia - abbess of a small hermit community. She

raised her in Christian values and virtues. When Anastasia grew up, her beauty and kindness were heard everywhere. Many wealthy Romans came to ask her for a wife, but she wanted to dedicate her life to God. One day the city governor's guards took the girl away. The governor tried to persuade her to give up her god and marry him. But as soon as he realized that Anastasia was firm in her faith, he subjected her to terrible torture. Nevertheless, the girl remained faithful to God. The Christian church canonized her as a saint because of her steadfastness.

Burgas Monastery "St. Anastasia" is from 8th century and was renovated in the 19th century. At present it inactive monastery and a cultural monument. It is situated on St. Anastasia Island, 6.5 km from Bourgas and can be reached by boat from the port.

#### 1.2.5. Sozopol



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

Sozopol is one of the most popular Black Sea resorts in Bulgaria and is the oldest town in this area. Its history is long and interesting, and the places you can visit there are numerous.



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Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

The old town of Sozopol is interesting and has been declared an archeological and architectural reserve. There you can see about 180 old houses that form the reserve. Their stone buildings will completely captivate you. Each house has its own story. Some of the more famous houses there are "the house of the Kurds", "the house of Todor Zagorov". In the Middle Ages Sozopol was surrounded by a fortress wall and towers on it. They have been completed over the years, but today only parts of the wall are preserved. Some of the remains reach 3-4 m height.

#### 1.2.6. Sv. Yoan Krastitel Monastery in Sozopol

It is believed that the monastery was built on the site of an ancient Thracian sanctuary, turned into a temple of Apollo the Healer, protector of ancient Apollonia.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

In the 4th century, when Christianity became the official religion in the Roman Empire, the church of the Holy Virgin Kaleosa was built on the site of the temple of Apollo. In the 6th century, Apollonia was renamed Sozopolis - "city of salvation", as one of the earliest Christian communities was established here. Gradually, around the church "Holy Mother of God Kaleosa" grew a monastery, which from the 9th century became one of the most attractive literary centers in these places.

The monastery was on the border between Bulgarian and confessional culture. This determined its important place in the period of the Christianization of the Bulgarian lands, when there was an urgent need for liturgical books and their reproduction. The monks also knew Bulgarian and Greek. That is why a large scriptorium was built here, where books were translated and transcribed for the next seven centuries. In the 13th century, the Byzantine general Michael Glava Trihont built a new church in the monastery.

In 1362 the monastery received a deed of gift from the Byzantine Emperor John V Palaeologus. During the conquest of this area by the Turks in 1453, the monastery survived and continued its active literary activity. There are preserved files for disputed lands with the Burgas monastery "St. Anastasia" from the 16th century, as

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well as patriarchal charters and decisions of the Holy Synod, which affect the activities of the monastery or condemn the very free behavior of some monks.

In the 17th century the monastery was attacked by pirates who captured it and settled in it. After managing to deal with them, the Turkish authorities decided to destroy the holy monastery so that it would not serve as a shelter for pirates. The monks, along with the surviving books and monastery property, were moved to the island of Halki in the Sea of Marmara.

The remains of the church built by Michael the Head of Trichon can still be seen in the southern part of the island. It was large (19x12 m) and richly decorated inside and out. The walls are preserved at a considerable height. The construction is typical of the medieval Bulgarian temples from the 12th to the 14th century with an artistic combination of stone and bricks. Remains of a dining room, residential and farm buildings, a library and a royal residence have been discovered around the monastery church. The monastery had the status of "royal" and was under the direct patronage of the Bulgarian kings and the Byzantine vassals.

In the 13th and 14th centuries there were five monasteries in the vicinity of Sozopol, the main one being the island monastery of St. John the Baptist. It was declared a royal monastery by the Bulgarian king Svetoslav Terter (1300-1321). It is believed that his wedding to the Byzantine princess Theodora, who later became the wife of his successor Michael Shishman (1322-1330), was also here.

Sozopol Monastery "St. John the Baptist" is from 9th century. It is a cultural monument but only ruins are visible.

### 1.2.7. Cape Maslen /The Oil Cape/

Between the mouth of Ropotamo River and Stomoplo Bay is the large Buruna Peninsula, which is divided into two parts by Sveta Paraskeva Bay. Its northern part ends with Cape Koraklya, and the southern - with Cape Maslen (Zeytinburun), recognized as the most beautiful on the Southern Black Sea coast.

The bare top of the promontory protrudes to a height of 30 m, and its slopes descend steeply to the sea. In front of it is a huge chamber of rock pines, which make it

inaccessible from the sea, and around them is dotted with sharp underwater rocks. The northern slopes of Cape Maslen are strongly divided by deep bays, small peninsulas, jagged capes and rocky islets. In the rock crevices the surf waves have carved strongly incised coves, resembling narrow corridors. They are often called "pseudo-fjords."

Unlike fjords, which have a glacial origin and are heavily incised inland bays with many bends, these straight abrasion corridors are the work of the destructive force of the sea. They can be entered only by boat, and in very calm sea.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

The southern part of the cape is also steep, but is protected from strong northeast winds. Here is a beautiful sheltered cove with a rocky bottom and colorful algae. During a storm, it became a refuge for boats, speedboats and small ships. Until recently, the rocky outcrops of Cape Maslen were one of the last Bulgarian habitats of the monk seal (Black Sea endemic), threatened with extinction worldwide.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

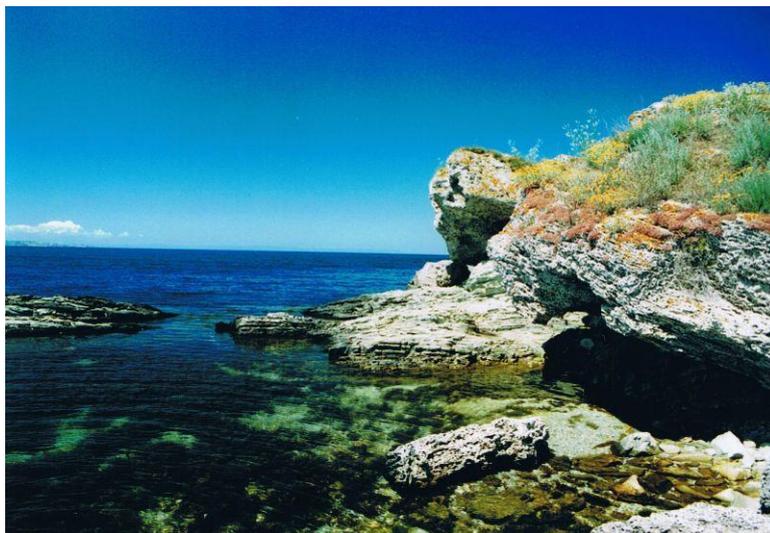
On Cape Maslen there is a rain gauge station, a powerful rotating headlight and an automatic bell, which turns on in case of opaque fog and warns the passing ships about the danger of underwater rocks.

Cape Maslen /Oily cape/ has an ominous reputation. In 1902, the Russian ship Tsarevich crashed into its rocks, and in 1929 the French cargo ship Jacques Fressine, carrying olives and olive oil, sank. In the past, rocks near the promontory often caused shipwrecks on Greek ships and olive oil that spilled over the sea and reached the promontory, and locals associate its name with wild raspberries, which until recently grew on the slopes of a sheltered bay in its southern part.

The Cape Maslen is 6 km from the town of Primorsko. The best time for reaching it is during April - October.

### 1.2.8. The Natural Reserve Ropotamo

In the southeastern part of Bulgaria, 50 km from Bourgas, is one of the most wonderful places of Bulgarian nature - "Ropotamo" Reserve".



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

Here you can see unique natural sites: the estuary of Ropotamo River, coastal swamps and wetlands, long forests, terraced mountain hills with deciduous forests and bizarre rock phenomena such as the Rock Lion and small caves, sandy beach with dunes, rocky beach, beautiful beach and a small rocky islet - Snake Island. The coastal strip presents simultaneously all stages of the development of the dunes - from their origin to their assimilation by grassy vegetation.

The famous estuary of Ropotamo starts from the ford Dolap getchit and ends at the mouth of the river on the Black Sea, near Cape St. Dimitar. Here the river is calm and deep. Its shores are overgrown with dense forests, intertwined with vines. The low swampy areas of the estuary and the old lakes are covered with swamp reeds and magnificent water lilies.

On the right bank of the river one of the largest deposits of sea wormwood (a valuable medicinal plant) is preserved in our country. Near the sea, the road of Ropotamo is blocked by a wide sandy hair, on which sand lilies grow. More than 100 plant species in the reserve are included in the Red Book of Bulgaria. To the estuary, due to the invasion of sea water, the salinity of river waters increases up to 15 per mille, which favors a large variety of fish (both river and marine species). 257 species of birds have been identified in the Ropotamo Reserve, eight of which are globally endangered. There are 71 species of birds included in the Red Book of Bulgaria. The

reserve is a wintering ground for very rare birds and an important stopover on the Black Sea migration route Via Pontica. From the mouth of Ropotamo River around the cliffs, by boat you reach Cape Maslen, which is in the buffer zone of the reserve.

Ropotamo was declared a Reserve in 1940. In 1962 it was re-categorized as a national park. The unregulated tourist flow, the large-scale construction, the busy highway through the park turn this beautiful natural area into the most ecologically endangered protected area of Bulgaria. A step in rescuing Ropotamo was declaring it a strict regime reserve in 1992. On its territory are the maintained reserves "Sand Lily" and "Water Lilies" and the Snake Island protected area. Ropotamo Reserve is 50 km from Bourgas, Bulgaria.

Between Primorsko and Kiten is the vast Devil's Bay, in which the small and quiet Atliman Bay goes even further inland. Once upon a time, the beautiful maiden Stana Urdovizka agreed to become the sultan's wife if he vacated the land, which she managed to circumnavigate with a horse from sunrise to sunset. The horse Stana rode around the area died of exhaustion in a small cove in the evening. Since then, the locals call the nearby Strandzha region Hasekia (ie land exempt from all taxes), the bay - Atlima (the bay of the horse), and the steep rocky promontory, south of it - Urdoviza.

The best time to visit the reserve is between May and September.

### 1.2.9. Begliktash - Thracian mysteries

The Begliktash sanctuary, only ten minutes by car from Primorsko, is the perfect combination of ancient history and Thracian mysticism. Diversify your sea vacation by visiting one of the largest megalithic sanctuaries discovered so far in Bulgaria. And if you believe in the supernatural, you may make a wish come true.

#### *How Begliktash was formed*

The Begliktash syenite blocks were the first here and looked quite different at first. The wind, the sun and the rains gradually surrounded them, and human hands reshaped them to turn them into a sanctuary of the supreme Thracian gods, used for

more than 2000 years. After hundreds of years of oblivion, Begliktash began to attract people again twenty years ago. The forest in which it is located was part of the hunting residence "Pearl" of former communist leader Mr. Todor Zhivkov, which is why the sanctuary was discovered by scientists only in 2003.

Begliktash - translated from Turkish means "Natural tax stone". It is believed that in Ottoman times, local shepherds came here to pay the tax on their flocks.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

### ***What will you see on Begliktash***

Before you start on the path with the rock formations, look at (and best of all take a picture) the map with the legend of the sanctuary, as it will be difficult to find your way around the rocks. The most famous is the rock group called the Wedding Bed. Although very little is known about the mystical rituals of the Thracians, researchers believe that the rock-cut gutters at their sanctuaries (including here at the Begliktash Marriage Bed) were used to pour sacred liquids for sacrifices - wine, blood from sacrificial animals, honey, milk. The ritual was performed on the day of the summer solstice, when the Mother Goddess and the Sun God symbolically married.

Here are the Stone Throne, where the high priest stood, and the Divine Step - two rock formations, to which only the initiates are believed to have had access. The sixteen flat round stones you will see below are, according to scientists, an

astronomical clock, and the heart-shaped stone known as the Apostle Tash holds only three points.

There are numerous altars and ritual signs carved into the rocks. To be able to truly travel back thousands of years and imagine the life of the sanctuary, get a guide on site.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

### ***Wishes come true***

Many believe that some of the energy from the ancient rituals hovers on Begliktash even today, being strongest on the day of the summer solstice. They say that if you are there before sunrise on the day of the solstice and you wish for something, your wish will come true. Keep in mind that you probably won't be the only visitor. Dress in white, leave all bad thoughts and see if you can feel the energy of Begliktash.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

### ***How to reach Begliktash***

Begliktash is located in a wooded area 5 km from the town of Primorsko. There is an asphalt road and a parking lot where you can leave your car and continue on foot for another 20 minutes on a dirt road (the dirt road is usually with deep tracks and is accessible only by jeep). Take at least three or four hours, preferably half a day. Pack your lunch and walk the entire trail all the way to the beach overlooking Cape Maslen. There is an entrance fee of BGN 2.

At one point, a large meadow unfolds in front of you, among which rises the unusual stone ensemble, which has been turned into an open-air museum. The question of whether Begliktash is a Thracian sanctuary - a place for ritual practices, for worship or appeasement of the gods, or is a natural phenomenon of huge pieces of rock, is not particularly important. With more imagination you can see the forms of a throne, an altar, a marriage bed for the union of the sun god and Mother Nature. With more faith you can feel the magical power of the place and, as the esotericist advise, make a wish, because this place makes wishes come true.

### **1.2.10. Ahtopol**



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

After the detour from Ropotamo the road continues to the south. It is well maintained, in some places green tunnels of dense deciduous vegetation are crossed passing through the rivers Devil's River and Ropotamo River and in about forty minutes reveals the beautiful peninsula of Ahtopol. The sea spreads and merges with the blue one, under the grassy hill rocks appear, in which the waves break playfully. In the distance you can see a hilly shore where seagulls and two storks rest.

In the small town of Ahtopol there is a wonderful promenade, which is shaped like a long terrace overlooking the sea. A nice place is the lighthouse, which landed like a white bird on large rocks near the pier. The rest of the center has been turned into a mess of noisy stalls and countless restaurants.

Since the central beach of Ahtopol seemed quite crowded and the sea in some places dirty, the tourist can go to Silistar beach. It is located 6 km south of Sinemorets. The beach is made of fine sand, the water is transparent and clear, at both ends there are rocks with which the waves are constantly playing and forming bizarre shapes.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

There is a paid and free area on the beach and tourists can enjoy sand lilies. We relax on the warm and fine sand, in front of us the sea quietly sings its song, a moment of calm that will burn for a long time, sealed in our emotional memory. If the weather gets bad you can go to the southernmost point of Bulgaria - Rezovo.

The road to get there is quite narrow - in some places cars pass by waiting, but it is well maintained. The road passes through a green tunnel of deciduous trees. Rezovo is a quiet and peaceful place, without unnecessary restaurants and hotels. At a terraced height there is a view of the sea - on the other shore is Turkey - you can see a long, undeveloped beach. We go down the stairs to the sea where the river Rezovska flows into the Black Sea. We start on the flat path, which is suitable for a light and short walk.

Below is the river, which moves lazily towards the sea, small fishing boats are anchored on the rocky shore. At the other end of the village find large stone blocks rise like guards on the shore, to which the waves rush like herds of white horses to break and disappear into foam. A raw beauty.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

### 1.2.11. Veleka

Another walk one can decide to take in the region is along the Veleka River. Before reaching Sinemorets a narrow bridge is crossed, in front of which there are border police - not every car stops. At the end of the bridge there is a space shaped like a parking lot, below are the boatmen with whom to walk on the river. Veleka moves slowly, both banks are immersed in long vegetation. Turtles come out on the rocks, cormorants fly in the sky, circles of swimming fish form in the river - a harmonious green world in which it is a real pleasure to dive. At the end of the walk the river flows and reaches the sea.

Common borders. Common solutions.



Source: <https://nasamnatam.bg>

Malko Tarnovo is a town where tourists can save themselves from the summer heat. In Malko Tarnovo one sinks into the green world of Strandzha. Unfortunately, the road is not maintained and at times the trip is more like off-road, but if you have a more passable car or do not worry about the deep gaping holes, you will be able to enjoy the mountains. A green tunnel of trees appears, everything around is reminiscent of a fairy tale - the aroma of wild flowers and the mesmerizing sounds of forest dwellers... It turns out that the town has a folk festival - on the square there is a cart painted in cheerful colors, waiting for those wishing to ride, a number of trees are dressed in colorful woolen rugs, and in the central part of the square there is an arch shaped like a horseshoe of colorful embroidery, as if calling you to go under it and remember the beauty of Bulgarian folklore. Of course, there are stalls selling treats and souvenirs. The cheerful folk music contributes to the festive mood. After tasting the sweetness of the festive atmosphere, we go to see four houses that form a complex of archaeological, ethnographic, Revival museums and a house in which the biodiversity of Strandzha is presented. The ethnographic museum has beautiful lace, objects from the life of the Bulgarian Revival. The museum, which recreates the biodiversity of Strandzha, will be especially interesting if you travel with children. You can hear how the forest dwellers sound, learn more and get to know them from the many beautiful photos and drawings.



The next stop and attention is drawn to a tall church with a gilded dome glistening in the sun, which is located near the Archaeological Museum. Two women open the gate of God's temple for us (if it is not open you can ask the museum employee to find a person to open it for you). Among the coolness and beauty of the Holy Trinity Church we learn about its history - it was built for Bulgarian Catholics, in it the worship was conducted in Bulgarian when Greek was used elsewhere in the sixties of the nineteenth century. The church houses icons that adorned a temple in Edirne. The greatest pride of the church is the icon of the Blessed Virgin of Czestochowa, which is the patron saint of the unity of Christian nations and was crowned by Pope John Paul II himself during his visit to Sofia. The church in Malko Tarnovo was donated to keep his cap and a wonderful blessing. The women who take care of the church also shared their worries that the town with beautiful nature and centuries-old traditions is deserted, young people go to big cities or abroad, and those who stay do not live in a spirit of understanding - the priest of the Orthodox church does not allow non-Orthodox people in the church.

## 5. INCENTIVES AND LIMITATIONS FOR THE GREEN AND CULTURAL TOURISM SET BY NATIONAL/REGIONAL REGULATIONS

### Strategy for sustainable tourism development in Bulgaria (2014-2020)

#### *Measures to improve the competitiveness of tourism in the region*

##### 1. Creation of image of the Black Sea region as unified tourist destination:

- General strategy for tourism development;
- Development and positioning of appealing tourist brand;
- Improvement of safety and security, including training of staff, tourist police, action plans to mitigate averages.

##### 2. Improvement of the legislative basis and the administrative regulations of the green tourism.

- Harmonization of standards for categorization of tourist accommodation places
- Conform with EU and world wide quality standards
- Unification of sign postage of tourist places and routes

#### *Measures for improvement of tourism competitiveness in the region:*

##### 1. Economic incentives for tourism development:

- Tax discharges for increasing the international competitiveness and hospitality
- Liberalization of foreign investment (eg facilitating the acquisition of property by foreign nationals)
- Establishment of public-private partnerships to expand the investments, participation in infrastructure projects, construction of roads, etc.

##### 2. Human resource management:

- Training of staff (during employments and participation to initiatives of „long life learning”)
- Establishment of partnership between business and vocational institutions offering apprenticeships based on dual education system in the universities
- Improving the image of the sector through increase of remuneration, ensure constant employment, provision of opportunities for career growth and development

### 3. Tourism and sustainability

- Ensure the exploration of the „green” tourism (eco, sustainable, green, geo, social, responsible tourism)
- Going from the entertainment to the responsibility
- The sustainability: beyond business and economics
- Sustainable tourism is change of attitude and viewpoint: destination and local population is the core point rather than tourists
- Sustainable tourism is related with multilevel and multiple stakeholder education: tourists, tour operators, local population

### 4. Use of virtual reality in the hotel and restaurant management

- Prices and income management
- Marketing and PR
- Customer service at hotel reception
- Customer services: feedback in the social media
- Virtual training game for management, where participants are divided into teams and should manage 500-room hotel within a competitive virtual market
- Matching demand and incomes of each hotel operation based on decisions of the hotel management team as well as those of the competitive hotels management teams
- VR provides unique opportunities for education of managers to improve their managerial and operating skills and efficiency of work
- Prices and incomes management
- Group sales



Project funded by the  
EUROPEAN UNION



- Marketing and PR
- Customer service at hotel reception
- Customer services: feedback in the social media
- Function: restaurant and culinary
- Function: parties and meetings
- Function: household
- Financial reports
- Monitoring of competitors

## 6. SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<b>Tourist resources</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wide dunes and beach lines of large capacity of beach resources.</li> <li>- Favorable pre-conditions for tourism development in Bulgaria - low salinity, not life-threatening flora and fauna, flat bottom of the beaches;</li> <li>- Unique combination of mountain and marine air for health tourism development.</li> <li>- Biodiversity for environmental, hunting and photo tourism (protected areas and natural landmarks)</li> <li>- Unique culture heritage dated back to old eras and civilizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environment pollution - pollution of agricultural lands with domestic and waste from building activities in the resorts. Overload of beach capacities.</li> <li>- Challenging management of beaches by the state authorities due to concession sub-contracting to private companies.</li> </ul>
<b>Superstructure</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Variety of places for accommodation</li> <li>- High share of 3 and 4 star accommodation places (55% of the rooms)</li> <li>- High share of the hotels incl. 4-star hotels</li> <li>- Variety of restaurants</li> <li>- High share of the restaurants (53% of seats)</li> <li>- Increase of the high-category restaurants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low share of 5-star restaurants (6% of the rooms)</li> <li>- Low share of the high-category restaurants (15,6% of the seats are located in 4 and 5 star restaurants)</li> <li>- Few accommodation places operate out of the active tourist season</li> <li>- Lack of year-round working high category hotels</li> </ul>

Tourist industry	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase of number of enterprises in the sector "Hotel and restaurant management" and increase in their relative share in the total number of enterprises;</li> <li>- Increase of revenues from the activity and net revenues from sales in "Hotel and restaurant management".</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decrease of value of tangible fixed assets of enterprises in "Hotel and restaurant management" sector (in 2016 it was 3.14% lower than in the basic year 2013)</li> <li>- Problems related to the quality of tourist services provided by not professional enterprises, which do not conform the established standards, rules and business ethics thus decreasing the image of the whole destination;</li> <li>- Deficiency of qualified tourist staff resources due to low remuneration level, short season of the employment and unfavorable conditions of work in some places.</li> </ul>
Marketing mix	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Well-developed marine vocational tourism</li> <li>- Development of event (wedding) tourism</li> <li>- Development of cultural cognitive tourism</li> <li>- Favorable quality-price ratio of the offered tourist products</li> <li>- Broad tourist product distribution network</li> <li>- Availability of tourist information centers in the places</li> <li>- Availability of printed and digital promotion materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poorly developed sport tourism</li> <li>- Poorly developed congress tourism</li> <li>- Dominated low-budget summer sea recreational tourism</li> <li>- Competitiveness of prices</li> <li>- Strong dependence of the summer sea tourism on the large transnational tour operators</li> <li>- The tourist information center in Nessebar is not authorized to sell souvenirs and information materials</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participation of the municipalities at selected tourist fairs (Germany, Great Britain, Poland, Check Republic)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The tourist information center in Nessebar does not make any statistics and does not dispose of database of the number of visits and visitor interests</li> <li>- Lack of high-quality image brochure of destinations</li> <li>- Lack of brochures promoting specialized tourist products (wedding, congress, etc. tourism)</li> <li>- Need of redesign of the official municipal websites and their upgrade with tourist information</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tourist demand</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stable level of demand for cultural and cognitive tourism and increasing visits to the museums</li> <li>- Increasing the number of overnight stays and the number of overnight stays by foreigners</li> <li>- Keeping the average stay of Bulgarian tourists</li> <li>- Increase in income from an overnight per foreign tourist and from foreign tourist for his entire stay</li> <li>- Increasing level of tourist demand of British, Polish and Romanians to the Bulgarian destinations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demand of a standard maritime tourism</li> <li>- Low level of demand of cruises tourism</li> <li>- Decrease of the number of overnights and the number of overnights by Bulgarian tourists</li> <li>- Reducing the average stay of foreign tourists</li> <li>- Typical seasonal character of the tourist demand to the destinations</li> <li>- Decrease of revenues from overnight stay of a Bulgarian tourist</li> <li>- Variations in the tourist demand from German and Russian tourist to the destinations.</li> </ul>

OPPORTUNITES	THREATS
<b>Political</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhancing EU integration, opportunities for more effectively use of resources for regional development of tourism within different programmes</li> <li>- Boosting transnational cooperation in tourism particularly between the Black Sea countries</li> <li>- Bulgaria's position is to act for stabilization of the geopolitical relations on the Balkans</li> <li>- Active policy of the Ministry of tourism for Bulgaria's positioning on the Chinese tourist market</li> <li>- Priority given to the cultural-cognitive tourism in Bulgaria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strain the political opposition between the EU and the US, on the one hand, and Russia, on the other</li> <li>- Strain the military and political conflicts in the Middle East and new refugees to Bulgaria</li> <li>- Contradiction of Bulgaria's foreign policy towards Russia, which ensures the major part of the tourist flow to Bulgaria</li> <li>- Increase of the strategic partnership between Russia and Turkey in tourism</li> <li>- Danger of terrorist acts by Islamic fundamentalism</li> </ul>
<b>Juridical</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improvement of the legislative background for tourism</li> <li>- Institutional and legislative support to public-private partnership development in tourism and enhancing the role of of the NGOs</li> <li>- Legislative changes to facilitate the incoming tourist staff from third countries</li> <li>- Stimulating the small and medium enterprises development in tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increasing the competitiveness on the labor market, which adversely affects the level of employment in tourism</li> <li>- Visa permission of tourists searching for resorts along the Bulgarian Black Sea</li> <li>- Dynamic development of the legislative basis in tourism</li> </ul>

Economic	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stability of financial economic system of the country</li> <li>- Measures for improvement of the business climate and involvement of foreign and local investors to utilize new tourist territories and places</li> <li>- Efforts by the Ministry of tourism to attract and increase the direct foreign investments in tourism</li> <li>- Expand of shared economy in tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adverse impact of future economic recessions</li> <li>- Decrease of interest and trust by foreign investors in tourism</li> </ul>
Demographic-social	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase of the number of elderly people who can afford to spend resources in tourism</li> <li>- Increase of the educational level of population in Europe and increased interest to cultural cognitive trips</li> <li>- Strengthening health care and interest in health and recreational tourism</li> <li>- Increase in self-organized holiday trips through the use of electronic distribution channels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Migration of qualified tourist staff to competing (more attractive) municipalities and destinations</li> <li>- Lack of human resources for tourism with a relatively high level of education and good professional qualifications</li> </ul>
Ecological	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High degree of compliance of drinking water in the country</li> <li>- Excellent and good quality of bathing water in the country and municipalities along the coast</li> <li>- Introduction of the principles of the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Progressive increase of car traffic and risk of air pollution</li> <li>- Dustiness of the air in the urban areas (from construction sites and dustiness of the streets)</li> <li>- High degree of spatial concentration</li> </ul>

<p>circular economy in the tourism industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adequate national and municipal legislation for environment protection</li> </ul>	<p>of tourist production sites in close proximity to unique natural and cultural resources (beaches and architectural and archaeological monuments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reconstruction of part of the coast, causing a negative effect on the environment</li> <li>- Danger of contamination of coastal waters from passing large cargo vessels</li> <li>- Danger of natural disasters (landslides and erosion processes, turbulence, etc.) on the overall tourist activity in coastal areas</li> </ul>
<p>Technological</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Renovation and development of the transport network in the country through accelerated construction of the “Black Sea” highway</li> <li>- Improvement and development of the general transport infrastructure in the places not used for tourism</li> <li>- Digitization of the creation, distribution and communication of the tourist product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase of costs for hardware, software and professional staff to work with digital and online applications</li> <li>- Danger of violating the rights of consumers with misleading information and non-fulfillment of the agreed online quantity and quality of the offered tourist product</li> <li>- Risk of hacker attacks and breach of security of confidential information exchange</li> </ul>

***Opportunities and challenges for business development in green tourism and preservation of historical heritage as a prerequisite for sustainable tourism in the Black Sea region***

- ✓ Similar location and resources, but different degree of development and positioning on the tourist markets in the region
- ✓ Country specifics in terms of political, historical, administrative, legislative, economic and social factors

***Negative trends of mass tourism predomination in the region***

- High concentration (in time and space) leading to economic, social and environmental imbalances
- Maintaining the image of a "cheap destination" for low-budget holidays, including some unfavorable for the image types of tourism (alcohol, gambling, etc.)
- Irrational use of tourist resources and tourist infrastructure
- Strong dependence on foreign tour operators. Capital outflows and revenues from the development of tourism products to external companies

**Trend of dominance of mass tourism in the region**

***Negative aspects:***

- Unfair distribution of economic benefits: a small part of the income remains with the local population, while it suffers most of the negatives from the tourism development
- Difficulties in recruiting, training and retaining qualified staff due to high seasonality, unsecure employment, low remuneration (in order to maintain competitive prices), lack of incentives for career growth
- Social mismatch between rich tourists and poor locals who serve the tourists
- Mass tourism contradicts the entrepreneurial initiative, contributes to the development of the gray economy, hinders the growth of small and medium enterprises in tourism

### *Challenges:*

- Attraction of more solvent tourists and guests
- Transition from “mass” to “alternative” tourism
- Reducing the seasonality of supply and demand
- Establishing the image of the region as a safe and secure destination
- Growth of internal tourism
- Strategic approaches to sectoral development in the region

### *A targeted Model for development:*

- The tourist offer is expanded to include specialized products based on existing infrastructure

### *Positive aspects:*

- Balancing tourist flows
- Increase of use of local products and services
- Establishment of secondary destinations (around the primary ones)
- Encouraging responsible behavior on the part of businesses, tourists, travel agents and administrations

### *Not targeted spatial model for development:*

#### *Positive aspects:*

- Strong focus on sustainability
- Application of alternative tourism which is superior to mass tourism
- Balance in the regional and seasonal development
- Attracting solvent, socially responsible, informed, engaged tourists;

#### *Negative aspects:*

- Requires large initial investments and staff training, which limits the opportunities for rapid introduction into the service system.

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