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TOURISTIC MARKETING STUDY FOR THE MEHEDINTI - VIDIN CBC AREA



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ROMÂNIA

**TOURISTIC MARKETING STUDY
FOR
MEHEDINTI - VIDIN CROSSBORDER AREA**

Beneficiary: ASOCIAȚIA PRO-MEHEDINȚI

Drobeta Turnu Severin

2016

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I. THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE JOINT NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE MEHEDINTI - VIDIN AREA

1.1 General Presentation of the Mehedinti Touristic Area

1.1.1 Geographical Location

The Mehedinti county is located in the South-West of Romania, on the left shore of the Danube, bordering the Dolj county to the South-East, Caras-Severin to the West, Gorj to the North and Serbia and Bulgaria to the South. Mehedinti has a surface of 4900 sqkm (2.1% of the total area of the country) and a population of 306,601 inhabitants (1.5% of the country's population)¹.

Mehedinti is attested as of the end of the 15th century and according to the historian Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu, in his work "Istoria critica a romanilor", the name of Mehedinti comes from Mehedinski², a Slavonic term referring to "those from Mehadia", a town on the territory of the Caras Severin county, bordering Mehedinti.

1.1.2 Land Features

The complex geological structure and the differentiated action of external factors helped develop a wide variety of land features on the entire territory of the Mehedinti county, grouped into mountain, hill and plain areas.³

The land of Mehedinti includes mountains, hills, plateaus and plains and is displayed as a natural amphitheatre, arranged in stairs, oriented from the North-West-North to the South-South-East. The gradual arrangement of the land across a height span of 1400 m between Varful lui Stan (1466 m high) and Balta Ascunsa (50 m) defines the large variety of the land, which is likewise characteristic for the entire country. If the highest step of the land is located to the West and North-West of the county, in Almajului Mountains and Mehedintului Mountains, the following lower step is 400-500 m high and is known as the Mehedinti Plateau, a geographical area continuing with the hills of Cosustei and Motrului, as well as the Baclesului Plateau and the High Balacitei Plain to the South and South-East. From here, a slope of some tens of metres marks the transition to the lowest land in the county, divided by rivers into the Blahnitei Plain, the Punghinii Plain and a small part of the Plenitei (Bailestiului) Plain⁴.

1.1.3 Climate

Being located in the South-West of Romania, the Mehedinti county has a temperate continental climate, with significant Mediterranean influences. At some times, during winter, warm and wet Mediterranean and oceanic air invades our county, while waves of warm and dry Saharan air arise in some summers.

The microclimate of Mehedinti is also impacted by the existence of 830 sq km of accumulation lakes formed by the 2 reservoirs of the Portile de Fier water power systems. The formation of the reservoir on the Cerna river, in Ivanul, also has an impact on the microclimate of the Cerna Valley.

The specific climate of the Mehedinti county allows for the proper growth and development, both in a natural - accidental manner and in organised plantations, of fig trees and almond trees, magnolias, Tulipa hungarica, bushes

¹ The 2014-2020 Development Strategy of the Mehedinti County, <http://www.informatiadeseverin.ro/is/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Strategia-de-dezvoltare-CJ-Mehedinti-2014-2020.pdf>

² B. P. Haşdeu, *Istoria critică a românilor*, 1984, 659pp.

³ V. Cucu, Ana Popova Cucu, *Judeţul Mehedinţi*, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, Bucharest, 1980, p. 17

⁴ The 2014-2020 Development Strategy of the Mehedinti County, idem

and plants classified as living fossils. In order to protect the specific flora and fauna of the Mediterranean subclimate, the area to the upstream of Portile de Fier I, as well as the karst area of Northern Mehedinti have been classified as the protected areas "Parcul Natural Portile de Fier" [Portile de Fier Natural Park] and "Geoparcul Natural Platoul Mehedinti" [Mehedinti Plateau Natural Geopark].

1.1.4 Hydrography

The main courses of water in the Mehedinti county are the Danube, between Svinita and Salcia, with the Mehedinti sector of the Danube including 220 km, Cerna, flowing to the Western extremity of the Mehedinti county, Topolnita, Cosustea, Motru and Blahnita.

The Danube river is the major water artery in the Mehedinti county. Given the tectonic features and the diverse lithology of the area, the river changes its direction, which results in the large islands on the Danube: Ada Kaleh, currently covered by the waters of the Portile de Fier I lake, Golu, Simian, Corbului and Ostrovu Mare. The Portile de Fier I reservoir was built to the upstream of Gura Vaii, and Portile de Fier II was built in Ostrovu Mare.⁵

The affluents of the Danube differ according to the land: the Danube receives many affluents with a low flow in the mountain area, with Mraconia, Eselnita and Cerna being the most significant. The Danube collects the following affluents from the Mehedinti Plateau: Bahna with its affluents, Racovat and Tarovat, the Jidostita and the Topolnita rivers. Two streams flow into the Danube in the plain area of the county: Blahnita and Drincea, originating from the Getic Piedmont.

The Motru river, the second major river, flows to the Eastern side of the county, along 90 km, and is considered the most important affluent of the Jiu due to its high flow. The main affluents of the Motru are: Motrul Sec, Motrisorul, Brebina, Cosustea and Husnita.

The territory of the county is bathed in the waters of various lakes, whose formation classifies them into: reservoirs developed as embankments were built: Portile de Fier I, Ostrovul Mare (Portile de Fier II), the Motru lake; lakes formed through the natural blocking of a valley: the Vintila lake in the Ilovat commune; lakes in the Danube floodplain: Vadului, Garla Mare, Fantana Banului; karst lakes in the Mehedinti Plateau: Zaton, Balta - permanent, Ponoarele and Gornovita - temporary; lakes in lake depressions: Jiana Mare, Rotunda, Bucura. All these lakes play an outstanding part in terms of landscape and fishing.

The Mehedinti county has a rich network of caves and karst phenomena, as well as a genuine system of groundwater located at a depth of 2 to 40 m, and whose purity is close to the salt content of mineral water. The groundwater network boasts significant resources, classified in terms of land type:

Water basins with major reserves of potable groundwater were identified in the Mehedinti county: the Strehaia basin, Poiana Gruii, Jiana Mare-Vanju Mare, while the following have mineral and thermal water: the SchelaCladovei-Gura Văii basin, Bala-Crainici.

Likewise, an abundant network of mineral wells is found in the Mehedinti county, along the Cerna Valley, as well as in Balta, Varciorova, Schela, at the contact between the Mehedinti Plateau and the Getic Depression, in the areas of Balta, Crainici, Comanesti and close to Severin. Wells or appearance of mineral water that has not been investigated have been identified in: Colibasi, Lupsa, Baia de Arama, Balta, Varciorova.

⁵ The 2014-2020 Development Strategy of the Mehedinti County, op. cit.

1.1.5 Resources

The Mehedinti county not only has various types of land, but also great soil diversity. Thus, brown-acid soils and litho-soils can be found to the North and North-West of the county, with typical and cambic chernosems to the West and South-West. Most of the county is covered by brown and brown-reddish soils, being a favourable environment for growing noble vine for the production of superior wines. These features resulted in the development of hilly viticultural areas: Balacita, Oprisor, Vladaia, Corlatel, Punghina, Vanju Mare, Rogova, Severin, Corcova⁶.

Construction materials are the most frequent natural resources of the subsoil of the Mehedinti county⁷.

Due to its position in the mountain, plateau and plain areas, Mehedinti includes geological structures that result in the existence of subsoil resources with an outstanding economic importance. The jurassic calcars in the Varanic - Gura Vaii area (Varanic and Spineanu hills) are exploited for usage as decorative stone. They are used as construction materials.

Mehedinti is characterised by the existence of massive calcar reserves (used to manufacture lime), marl and clay (used to manufacture cement). The jurassic calcar reserves in the Mehedinti Plateau were shaped by water and resulted in genuine complexes of karstic phenomena, such as the Topolnitei Cave, the Epuran Cave, the Zaton of Ponoarele, Podul lui Dumnezeu [God's Bridge], the Limestone pavements of Ponoarele, etc.

Clay and marl reserves can be found in the Cosustei and Motrului hills, as well as in the Orsova and Hinova areas. Sand and gravel are found on river valleys, as well as on the terraces of such valleys.

The following were identified in the subsoil of the county: ferrous, non-ferrous, non-metal minerals, coal (pitcoal, lignite), natural gas, thermal water, mineral water, rocks for the binding agent industry, rocks for constructions, natural aggregates. Of all the useful mineral substances that were identified, only a small part was exploited and is being exploited (coal, non-metal resources, non-ferrous mineral, thermal water, useful rocks, natural aggregates), and most of them have been exploited with certified or non-certified or only prospected reserves. Some of the existing exploitations currently have their activity interrupted for various reasons: difficult geological conditions, flooding by the Portile de Fier lake, useful content lower than profitability thresholds, etc.

Mineral water is one of the great richnesses of the Mehedinti county. Wells with an outstanding therapeutic value have been outlined in the latest years (Bala, Balta, Malovat and Varciorova). A significant hydro-thermal reserve with an artesian appearance was discovered in Schela Cladovei. A pool for balnear therapy was arranged here.

1.1.6 Environment

Environment plays a major part in social life, due to the interference between natural elements, soil, air, water, climate, biosphere, and elements created by human activity, resulting in the future development of society.

1.1.6.1. Protected areas and areas of a community interest

The protected areas in the Mehedinti county take up 174,897 hectares, including the area of the two parks in the county (67,805 hectares), i.e. the Portile de Fier Natural Park and the Domogled - Valea Cernei National Park, the area of the Mehedinti Plateau Geopark Natural Park (106,000 hectares), Natural Protected Area Blahnița (47.764 ha), Danube at Gârla Mare - Maglavit (area

⁶ The 2014-2020 Development Strategy of the Mehedinti County, op. cit.

⁷ V. Cucu, Ana Popova Cucu, Județul Mehedinți, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, Bucharest, 1980, p. 33-34

between Gârla Mare-Salcia)⁸, as well as 3 forest reserves with 132.5 hectares (the Starmina Forest, the Lunca Vanjului Forest and the Bunget Forest). This represents 35.7% of the county's area (490,000 hectares)⁹.

All protected natural areas within the county, of a national interest, depending on their declaration year, as per Law no. 5/2000, Government Decision 2151/2005, County Council Decision 23/1980 no. 26/1994, County Council Decision no. 13/2000, are as follows:

- 33 protected natural areas declared at a national level, according to Law no. 31/2000.
- 2 protected natural areas declared at a county level.
- 2 Natural Parks and a National Park (areas related to the county).

Protected natural areas are well maintained by the existing administration, for the Portile de Fier Natural Park and the Domogled - Valea Cernei National Park, the Mehedinti Plateau Geopark Natural Park, by the forest administrations in the area and the municipalities of towns and communes.

Natura 2000 sites

10 Natura 2000 sites have been validated on the county's surface, of which 7 also cover areas of the neighbouring counties - Gorj, Caras Severin and Dolj. Some of them are included in other protected areas, i.e.

- The Danube course - Bazias, the Almajului-Locvei Mountains and Portile de Fier are included in the Portile de Fier Natural Park;
- the Mehedinti Plateau site belongs to the Mehedinti Plateau Geopark Natural Park;
- Domogled - Valea Cernei is included in the Domogled - Valea Cernei National Park.

Table I.1. Natura 2000 sites

Note: SPA - Special Protection Areas for Birds and Fauna; SCI - Sites of Community

No.	NAME OF THE NATURA 2000 SITE	TYPE	COUNTIES
1.	Blahnita (47,764 ha)	SPA	MH
2.	The Jiului Corridor	SCI	GJ, MH, DJ
3.	The Danube Course - Bazias - Portile de Fier	SPA	CS, MH
4.	Domogled - Valea Cernei	SPA	CS, MH, GJ
5.	Domogled - Valea Cernei (8220 ha)	SCI	CS, MH, GJ
6.	Danube at Gârla Mare - Maglavit (9422 ha)	SCI	MH, DJ
7.	Almajului-Locvei Mountains	SPA	CS, MH
8.	Starmina Forest (114.9 ha)	SCI	MH
9.	Mehedinti Plateau (53,927.6 ha)	SCI	MH
10.	Portile de Fier	SCI	CS, MH

Importance

Source: The 2014-2020 Development Strategy of the Mehedinti County,

Green areas in the urban environment have a critical importance in improving the environment and bring many benefits for life quality. Vegetation improves the atmosphere with oxygen and reduces carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, also acting as a highly efficient filter for polluted air and as a mitigator of the effects of toxic gas.

- The towns and cities in the county included 214 ha of green areas as of 2013, distributed as follows: Drobeta Turnu Severin: 154 hectares; Orsova: 25 hectares; Strehaia: 16 hectares; Baia de Arama: 5 hectares; Vanju Mare: 14 hectares¹⁰.

⁸ <http://natura-ocrotita.ro/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Plan-management-ROSCI0299-Dun%C4%83rea-Ia-G%C3%A2rla-Mare-Maglavit.pdf>

⁹ The 2014-2020 Development Strategy of the Mehedinti County, op. cit.

¹⁰ The 2014-2020 Development Strategy of the Mehedinti County, op. cit.

1.2 General Presentation of the Vidin Touristic Area

1.2.1 Geographical Location

The Vidin district is located to the North-West of Bulgaria, covering 3022 sq km, i.e. 2.7% of the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria. The geographical position of the district has been beneficial for years in a row for the development of transport, trade, culture.

The Vidin district is a gate into the Republic of Bulgaria for Europe and the rest of the world. Borders: Romania to the north; Serbia to the West; the Balkans to the South and the Montana District to the East. To the northern border, the Danube facilitates direct connection with countries in the Danube basin.

Two trans-european corridors cross the Vidin sector: № 4 Craiova/Romania-Vidin-Sofia- Kulata and № 7 Rhine-Main-Danube.

The territory of the district covers 11 municipalities: Vidin, Boinitsa, Bregovo, Belogradchik, Gramada, Dimovo, Kula, Makresh, Novo Selo, Ruzhintsi, Chuprene¹¹.

1.2.2 Land Features

The diverse land of the Vidin district includes large areas of plains, hills and small forests. The following types of land are arranged alternatively from the North-East to the North-West. The hills in the Danube Plain, Pre-Balkan and the Main Chain of Old Balkan Mountains, resulting in a gradually increased height to this direction. Low coast areas such as Vidin-Archar-Orsoika have one of the most fertile soils, turned into agricultural land for various crops. The Pre-Balkan Area begins from Vrashka Ciuca and continues to the lower parts of the Balkan Mountains. The most known are the heights of the Rabishka hills (461 m) and the Belogradchik crests (1125 m), including hard calcar and crossed by the affluent of the Lom river in many parts. Carst formations (about 30 caves) are distributed at the surface and in the underground of this part of the Pre-Balkans, associated to underground karst hydrography. The Magura Cave, one of the most beautiful caves in the country, is located to the North-West of the Rabisha village, next to the Rabisha hill (municipality of Belogradchik). The Balkan Mountains act as a climate barrier, influencing the course of rivers¹².

1.2.3 Climate

The climate is continental and tempered, with quite cold winters and hot summers, with insufficient rains, as determined by the geographical position of the Vidin district. The average annual temperature is 11.2 °C, with the highest being reached in July, with an average temperature of 23.1 °C, and the lowest in January, with an average temperature of -1.7 °C. Rain is quite well distributed across seasons, of about 550-600 mm/sqm in the lowest areas of the district, and reaching 750 mm/sqm in the highest areas. Hard and extended droughts were recorded along the years. Snow lasts for about 50 days in winter, and more in the mountain areas, where the climate is wetter, favouring the development of forest vegetation. The wind blows most frequently from the West, and from the East-North-East in winter¹³.

1.2.4 Resources

Soils: The distribution of soils in the Vidin district is determined by physical and geographical features. The soil is mainly calcareous and typical

¹¹ http://www.vidin.government.bg/094/60-16-16/sidebar/oblast_vidin/istoriq.html

¹² http://www.vidin.government.bg/094/60-16-16/sidebar/oblast_vidin/klimat.html

¹³ http://www.vidin.government.bg/094/60-16-16/sidebar/oblast_vidin/klimat.html

chernosem in the Danube plain. To its South, in the North area of the Pre-Balkan, dark grey soils are developed, with forest grey and brown-coloured forest soils being present to the South. Hummus-carbonated soils are found in karst areas. Alluvial floodplain soils are found in river valleys. The main issues regarding soil quality are due to pollution by local population through constructions and household waste.

Biodiversity: There is a large biodiversity in the Vidin district. The rich flora is due to different and habitat conditions. About all types of habitat are found on this small territory. Unique conditions were created for the development and adaptation of the so-called endemism, i.e. local species only found in this district. The endemic species only found to the West of the old mountain and nowhere else is *Eranthis bulgaricus*.

Flora: Of the most interesting forms of endemism in the Balkan Mountains we mention: *Simphyandra wanery*, *Melisa altissima* and *Ramonda serbica*, a tertiary relic. Besides being a derelict species, *Ramonda serbica* shows an interesting biological phenomenon. This plant, also known as the Serbia Phoenix flower, can fully recover after staying without water and ground for one year and a half. Probably its capacity to enter anabiosis preserved this plant in the conditions of the continental climate, with drought and scorch during summer and cold in winter.

The diverse land and the different climate conditions of the district are the cause for the appearance of various plants. E.g. The Chuprene Biosphere Reservation is established with a view to preserving one of the largest natural forests of spruce (*Picea abies*) in Bulgaria. This reservation hosts the northernmost habitat of creeping pine (*Pinus mugo*) in the country, while the medium (buffer) area includes forests of beech (*Fagus sylvatica*).

The characteristic vegetation for this area includes beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and oak-hornbeam (*Quercus- Carpinus betulus*), that are well represented. Forest vegetation is important for the area.

Fauna: including 179 species of birds, 53 species of mammals, of which 14 species of bats, 11 species of amphibians and 15 species of reptiles. Birds are the best represented. Globally endangered species can be found here. Of these we remember the lesser kestrel (*Falco naumanni*) and the corncrake (*Crex crex*). Many birds are highly important at a European level - the black stork (*Ciconia nigra*), the red kite (*Milvus milvus*), the hen harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), the saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*), the rock partridge (*Alectoris graeca*), etc. These species include some of the most attractive birds in Bulgaria - the common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), the European roller (*Coracias garrulus*) and the blue rock thrush (*Monticola solitarius*). The diversity of birds is due to the fact that the migration routes of birds - *Via aristotelis* cross this area, as well as to the diverse habitat¹⁴.

1.2.5 Environment

Vidin is characterised by its maintained natural potential, since large manufacturing companies are missing.

Air: Air pollution is caused by industry, fuel facilities and road transport.

The main pollution sources are concentrated in Vidin, while pollution in the remaining municipalities is mostly due to households, for the use of heating fuel, as well as road transport in municipalities crossed by national roads. They have a local influence and bear no major impact on air quality.

Water: Water resources in the district include groundwater and surface water. Of these, the Timok and the Danube are natural borders with the Republic of Serbia and Romania. The district is crossed by the rivers Topolovets, Arciar, Vidbol, Lom, Cicilska, Komatitsa, Gramadska, Statevska and Skomplea,

¹⁴ http://www.vidin.government.bg/094/60-16-16/sidebar/oblast_vidin/okolna_sreda2.html

characterised as having a high water level in spring, and a low but stable level in autumn and winter.

Groundwater originates from karst. The Rabisha Lake, with the largest basin, lies next to the Mugura Cave, covering a surface of 3250 hectares. It is supplied by a beautiful underground well, as well as by the Arciar and Vidbol rivers. Groundwater is formed by a gravelly and sandy horizon, has a direct connection with the waters of the Danube and its level is influenced by the level of water in the river.

The Danube river is the main supply source of groundwater during May and June, and it drains them from September to December.

Highly mineral thermal water was found on the territory of the Vidin district, in the Vidin-Slanotran-Koshava area. High values of mineral components were found in the composition of water in this area - iodine, bromine, etc. - representing a valuable natural resource.

The water quality of the Danube river in the Vidin district area corresponds to the third category, i.e. water is highly polluted and can only be used for agriculture. The gorges of the Topolovets, Voinishka, Vidbol, Arciar, Skomlea, Lom rivers are of the first category until the first settlement and of the second category until confluence with the Danube, i.e. medium pollution. The main issue for water condition in the Vidin district is the absence of installations for the depuration of waste water in large towns and the absence of sewerage systems in small settlements.

Waste: The highest environmental issue in Vidin is waste. At the moment, waste management systems in the district and the municipality fail to meet European requirements and standards.

Waste collection for recycling purposes is limited. A large amount of domestic waste is stored in places that are not regulated for waste, with a large number of illegal storage areas.

The ISPA (Instrument for Structural Accession/Pre-Accession Policy) is currently undertaken in the Vidin district, supplying technical support for the construction of a regional storage for hard waste. This construction is expected to benefit all the 11 municipalities in the district.

Building a regional storage area is one of the actions to be taken in the upcoming years in order to achieve results and be able to implement the European waste management policy¹⁵.

1.2.5.1. Protected areas and areas of a community interest

Vrashka Ciuca is declared a protected area because this is the only place in the world where the vegetal species *Eranthis bulgaricus* grows and the only place in Bulgaria where the following species grow: *Centaurea calocephala*, the tommie crocus (*Crocus tommasinianus*) and the protected species Roman wormwood (*Artemisia pontica*), *Potentilla nicici*, wild peony (*Paeonia mascula*), the red twiggled lime tree (*Tilia rubra*) etc. This protected area lies at the border with the Republic of Serbia, in the area of the Izvor Mahala village, Kula municipality and has an area of 67.6 hectares.

Chuprenski buchi was declared a protected area in 2007; until then, it had been a neutral area next to the Chuprene reservation. Restrictions are unaltered here as well.

The *Kutovo Island* includes the Kutovo island on the Danube and is located at km 801 of the river, next to the Kutovo village in the municipality of Vidin. It is declared a protected area with a view to protecting the habitat of rare species of water plants and birds: the black-crowned night heron, (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), the grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*), the little egret (*Egretta garzetta*), the great

¹⁵ http://www.vidin.government.bg/094/60-16-16/sidebar/oblast_vidin/okolna_sreda2.html

white pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) and the Dalmatian pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), the common spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*), the great cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) and the pygmy cormorant (*Microcarbo pygmeus*), etc.

NATURA 2000

The Vidin district includes 18 areas approved for habitat protection as per the Directive for the preservation of the natural habitat of wild flora and fauna and 2 areas approved for habitat preservation as per the Directive for the preservation of the habitat of wild birds.

The largest area and the most significant one in terms of biodiversity in the Vidin region is the protected area "*Western Balkans and Pre-Balkan Mountains*", established according to the Habitats Directive. The area has a surface of 219,715 hectares and includes parts of the territories of the Vidin, Montana, Sofia districts. Protected areas of the Vidin district include areas of the Belogradchik, Dimovo, Kakresh, Ruzhintsi and Chuprene municipalities.

The rivers in the "*Western Balkans and Pre-Balkan Mountains*" are preserved in natural or almost natural conditions. They mostly follow their own natural course, and the areas of their terraces are slightly fragmented. Forests of common alder and willow tree growing along the rivers are a priority for the EU.

Rivers have a very rich fish fauna (representing basic food for otters. 9 fish species are found here, of which 5 fall under Application II in the Directive 92/43/EEC. For this reason, the protected area "*Western Balkans and Pre-Balkan Mountains*" is highly important for the knowledge of fish fauna.

The largest area in the Vidin district on the territory of the Western Balkans is the protected area "*Western Balkans and Pre-Balkan Mountains*" according to the Bird Protection Directive. This protected area of 146820 hectares includes more than 60 species of birds, of which 31 are included in the Red Book (for protected species), 22 bird species having a European importance. Here, one can see white and black storks, the common kestrel (*Falco tinnuculus*), hazel hens, nightbirds, some species of eagles, falcons, woodpeckers, etc.¹⁶.

1.3 The Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Mehedinti Area

1.3.1 The Morphological Touristic Potential

Land is a fundamental element in outlining the county's potential of attractiveness. **The Mehedinti Mountains** represent a major attraction point. Located to the South-West of the Meridional Carpathians, they cover a distance of 50 km from the South-West to the North-East.

The average height is 1200 m, with the peak at Varful lui Stan (1466 m), and the highest heights can be found in their central area. Their rock structure is diverse. Sedimentary structures include calcareous, argillite, marl, micaceous sandstone, etc. Metamorphic rocks can be found to the South and on the Eastern slope: gneiss, mica-schist, basic rocks, serpentines, placed over the sedimentary rocks. Massive calcareous form the rocky, prominent land of Piatra Cloșani and Culmea Domogled - Varful lui Stan.

Enthusiasts of mountain tourism and geological studies may travel through the massive quite easily, over marked paths, though some go through areas that are inaccessible at first sight. In some areas, the crest is also approached by local people who go to the sheepfolds or dwellings thereon.

The Mehedinti Plateau is located at the feet of the Mehedinti Mountains, having special features: similar to mountains in terms of structure and land, and similar to hills in terms of height. It is a plateau unit including crystalline schist

¹⁶ http://www.vidin.government.bg/094/60-16-16/sidebar/oblast_vidin/zabelejitelnosti.html

and calcar, with heights ranging from 400 to 600 m. Peaks higher than 600 m are referred to as Cornete. The presence of calcar has favoured the appearance of superficial and deep karst phenomena: breakwaters, caves, valleys, natural bridges, underground courses, dry valleys, dolines, extremely beautiful and admired by all the visitors. The most well-known sights of this type are as follows:

The karst complex of Topolnita, included in a 50-hectare reservation, where many original karst forms can be found. The most important is the Topolnita Cave, of a remarkable scientific interest, where all the evolution of a cave can be followed, from caving actions to colmation. The galleries sum up 12,000 m, placed over 5 steps, of which the 1,570 m Racovita Gallery is the most impressive speleological formation in the Carpathians. The complex also includes the Women's Cave, Epuran's Cave, with 2-storeyed galleries, as well as the Lunca Ciresului clearing. The complex hosts the **Topolnitei breakwater** as well, with a length of 20 km, extremely narrow, whose slopes are covered by a rich sub-Mediterranean vegetation.

The karst phenomena in Isverna include: The Isverna Cave, hosting a rich cave fauna and the Isverna well under the Cornetu Hill.

Karst formations in Balta: the Balta Cave - 600 m long, the Curecea Cave - 2200 m long, with calcar formations, running water, cave fauna, the Cave Plain - a wide and smooth calcar plateau with many permanent dolines and water swirls.

The karst phenomena in Bulba: the Bulba Cave is a mixed cave, including a network of three-storeyed galleries: active, sub-fossil and fossil level. Galleries are interrupted by several halls. The active gallery, crossed by a river, has several siphons. It boasts an abundant fauna and a significant reserve of guano. **The Bulba Breakwater** represents an interesting calcar canyon with high walls, caves and wells crossed by the Bulba Waters.

The Gura Ponicovei Cave was created by the Ponicova stream. The total length of the cave is 1666 m, with a relative height of 60 m. The cave includes 3 galleries (about 30 m high), located at different levels, ornamented with stalactites and stalagmites. It also includes many large halls with falling blocks, huge anemolites hanging from the roof and guano deposits. The cave is warm, with temperatures exceeding 11° C. The fauna is rich: bats, spiders, butterflies. Skeleton remains of *Ursus spelaeus* (the cave bear) can be found here.

1.3.2 The Touristic Potential of Climate

Climate and bio-climate resources are ever more important in tourism development at the county level, as their proper knowledge helps use them in promoting entertainment or relaxation tourism.

The geographical location of the Mehedinti county in the South-West corner of the country, in a depression of the Carpathian-Balkan arc and at its feet, provides the climate with specific particularities: the most important of them is the influence of Sub-Mediterranean climate, overlapping the continental temperate climate specific to the entire country¹⁷.

The general circulation of atmosphere is characterised by a Mediterranean and oceanic origin, bringing wetter and warmer air masses, especially during the cold times of the year. Therefore, winters are warmer, with high liquid precipitations as drizzle, snow and less frequent and intense freezing. Foehn phenomena can be noticed on the Eastern slopes of the Mehedinti Plateau. This results in increased air temperature, lower humidity, absence of precipitations and mostly clear sky.

The presence of several steps of the land, from the plain to the mountains, results in shades of mountain, hill and plain climate.

¹⁷ The 2014-2020 Development Strategy of the Mehedinti County,

West and North-West winds prevail on the territory of the county, the direction being given by the orientation of large land structures. West and North-East wind prevails in the Danube Gorges, due to the orientation of the corridor, while West and East winds are predominant in the plain area. Average wind speed is 4-6 m/s, and maximum speed does not go higher than 20 m/s.

Climate conditions must be known by tourism operators, so that they may adapt their offers according to the most favourable periods, so as to support the viability of the touristic area, generating economic and social benefits for local communities and improving the life experience of tourists.

1.3.3 The Hydrographic Touristic Potential

The hydrographic network of running waters of the county is dominated by the **Danube**, the second river in Europe in terms of length and flow after the Volga. Its length is 2860 km, with a surface of the hydrographic basin of 817,000 sq km, of which 221.7 sq km on the Romanian territory. It enters Romania at Bazias, forms the border with Serbia to the river Timok and with Bulgaria to Silistra, from where, to its confluence with the Prut, the Danube only covers Romanian territory, and from here, to the mouth of Chilia, it forms the border with Ukraine.

The lower Danube area (the Romanian area), 1075 km long, begins with the spectacular and impressive gorges of Portile de Fier, 144 km long, crossing the South-West of the Meridional Carpathians, as a transversal valley, with abrupt calcar slopes on a length of 9 km at the gorges. It is here where the water power and navigation system of Portile de Fier I was built, including the Portile de Fier I reservoir and a large water power station, with an installed power of 210 MW. Several old islands, that cannot be flooded (Ostrovu Corbului, Ostrovu Mare, Simian), exist in the Danube bed. The Portile de Fire II reservoir and water power station, with an installed power of 216 MW, were built between the Western shore of Ostrovu Mare and Mihailovac (on the Serbian bank). The presence of the Danube on the county's territory has a significant contribution to the diversification of the area's touristic offer, as many forms of tourism can be approached¹⁸.

The Cerna River, an affluent of the Danube, is 84 km long, with a basin surface of 1433 sq km. It streams from the Godeanu Massive, at a 2070 m height, it mostly covers the tectonic line between the Godeanu Mountains and Cerna (to the West) and Valcan and Mehedinti (to the East), going to the Portile de Fier I reservoir to the upstream of Orsova, after crossing Baile Toplet. On its upper course, the Cerna valley is accompanied by small calcar massifs, with abrupt slopes and high peaks, referred to as Ciucevele Cernei, ranging from North to South and being considered as highly picturesque.

The Motru River is an affluent of the Jiu on the territory of the Butoiesti commune (Mehedinti county). It is 120 km long, with a basin surface of 1900 sq km. It appears to the South West of the Valcan Mountains, under the Oslea peak, at a 1230 m height; it first crosses an area including crystalline schist and granite, separating the Valcan Mountains from the Mehedinti Mountains, it enters the calcar region of the Mehedinti Plateau, it then separates the Cosustei Piedmont from the Jiului Hills, it crosses Motru and Strehaia and covers the largest coal mining basin in Oltenia. Its annual flow is 4.3 cbm/s. Its main affluents are: Motru Sec, Cosustea, Husnita.

Stationary water in the county, highly useful especially for sea tourism and fishing, is classified as follows:

- natural lakes, including the Zaton, Ponoare and Gornovita karstic lakes to the North of the county, as well as the lakes in the Danube Wetlands: Lacul Vadului, Garla Mare;

¹⁸ The 2014-2020 Development Strategy of the Mehedinti County, op. cit.

- artificial lakes - the Ostrovu Mare lake (40,000 ha) - the first at a national level in terms of size, in the area of the Portile de Fier II water power plant; the Portile de Fier I lake (10,000 ha) is the second largest lake at a national level, formed behind the embankment with the same name.

A major touristic interest was noticed for the Danube Gorges, whose name originates in the successions of widening and narrowing (*clisuri*) determined by the alternation of rocks.

Significant groundwater resources were identified in the subsoil of the Mehedinti county, classified in terms of land type:

- water resources in mountain and plateau areas are stored in alteration deposits at the surface of rocks, in the crack network, appearing under the form of wet areas or wells, to the basis of slopes. By catching wells, as well as humid areas, through drainage, major sources of potable water for the central water supply to the settlements in the area can be established;
- in hill and high plain areas, groundwater is located at a 20-80 m depth, with limited discharge to the feet of slopes and valleys where erosion has intercepted such layers. Aquifers can also be intercepted through drilling performed in the plateau area. Both by means of drilling and by catching wells, the settlement in the region can be supplied with potable water from a central system;
- in the plain area to the South of the county, water is located in sand and gravel layers at different depths, depending on the height: the Danube Wetlands 0-2 m, 1st terrace 2-8 m, 2nd terrace 8-12 m, 3rd terrace 12-20 m, 4th terrace less than 20 m. In the plain area as well, as the border between two terraces, terrace wells with high flows appear, that can be caught for water supply to settlements (the Gruia, Garla Mare, Obarsia de Camp villages, etc.).

Based on the hydro-geological drilling for research and exploitation purposes performed by specialised companies, water basins with major reserves of potable groundwater were identified in the Mehedinti county: the Strehaia basin, Poiana Gruii, Jiana Mare-Vanju Mare, while the following have mineral and thermal water: the SchelaCladovei-Gura Văii basin, Bala-Crainici¹⁹.

Wells or appearance of mineral water that has not been investigated have been identified in: Colibasi, Lupsa, Baia de Arama, Balta, Varciorova.

The balnear resort of Bala developed around the settlement with the same name, having a zonal interest, with wells of sulphurous mineral, oligomineral, thermal water (23.5 - 29.5 Celsius degrees) and therapeutic sludge, indicated for the treatment of rheumatism, gynaecological disorders and locomotor impairments, as well as gastritis, liver failure or kidney diseases. The development potential for spa tourism is high in the area, considering the mineral water basin that is still not fully exploited.

1.3.4 The Bio-geographical Touristic Potential

The mild, sub-Mediterranean climate of the county is suitable for the extended development of vegetal species and associations specific to the Southern area, as well as rare flowers. In the Blahnitei Plain, for instance, one can still find groups of downy oak, mixed with pedunculate oak, Turkey oak, elm and Hungarian oak²⁰.

Thermophile plants are found in the area of the Danube gorges and in the calcar regions of the Mehedinti Mountains and the Mehedinti Plateau: lilac, manna ash, Oriental hornbeam, wayfarer, prickly burweed, Turkish hazel, as well as some rare species, such as three-lobed maple tree, yew, tulip.

¹⁹ The 2014-2020 Development Strategy of the Mehedinti County, op. cit.

²⁰ Ibidem

Turkey oak and Hungarian oak forests, alternating with pastures and agricultural land, are present to the centre-South of the county, while forests of common oak, Turkey Oak and Hungarian Oak predominate at the feet of the Almaj Mountains and in the southern area of the Mehedinti Mountains. The central and northern part of the Mehedinti Plateau is populated by common oak forests, alternating with beech trees, while beech tree develops on the slopes of the Mehedinti Mountains.

The fauna of the county is determined by the presence of many thermophile species, such as: Hermann's tortoise, horned viper, *Euscorpius carpathicus*, stag beetle, Balkan green lizard. The forest fauna is rich and diverse in species: wild boar, deer, bear (of a significant hunting interest), marten, lynx, fox, squirrel, wild cat, woodpecker, etc.

Protected areas and natural reservations cover a large part of the total surface of the county and represent certain touristic attractions:

The Portile de Fier Natural Park is located to the South-West of Romania, at the border with Serbia and Montenegro, covering a surface of 115,655 ha, and partially occupying territories in the Caras-Severin and Mehedinti counties in the South part of the Locvei and Almajului Mountains and to the South-West of the Mehedinti Plateau²¹.

The Portile de Fier Natural Park is a protected area established pursuant to Law no. 5/2000 on the approval of the Plan for the Arrangement of the National Territory - 3rd Section - Protected Areas, as a territory where the remarkable beauty of landscapes and biological diversity may be exploited without altering traditions, and the enhanced quality of community life is the outcome of business activities of the inhabitants, in full harmony with nature.

The area of the Portile de Fier Natural Park is covered by half of the number of species known in our country's flora, which explains the flower growing prestige acquired by the Portile de Fier Gorges²². The diversity of habitats has favoured a rich and varied fauna, represented by many species of fish, reptiles, birds and mammals, rare in the other parts of Europe, that prove to be very important for ecological balance. This area is the most important in Romania from a geological point of view, with unique morphological, paleontological and structural features²³.

According to Law no. 5/2000 on the approval of the Plan for the Arrangement of the National Territory - 3rd Section - Protected Areas, the territory of the Portile de Fier Natural Park include 14 protected natural areas of a national interest, declared as such by decisions of the Caras-Severin and Mehedinti County Councils from 1973 to 1994, except for the fossil location of Bahna, that was declared as such in 1955, through a ministry decision. These are supplemented by 4 protected natural areas, established as per Government Decision no. 2151/2004²⁴.

Table I.2. Protected areas (reservations) in the **Portile de Fier Natural Park**

No.	Name of the protected area	Type of reservation	of IUCN classificati on	Surface (ha)
1	Balta Nera - Danube	combined	IV	10.0
2	Bazias	combined	IV	170.9
3	The Calinovat Island	birds and fauna	IV	24.0

²¹ <http://www.pnportiledefier.ro>

²² Matacă Sorina Ștefania, 2005: *Parcul Natural Porțile de Fier. Floră, vegetație și protecția naturii*, Editura Universitaria Craiova, 550 pp., Drobeta Turnu Severin.

²³ <http://www.pnportiledefier.ro/management.html>

²⁴ <http://www.pnportiledefier.ro/management.html>

4	Rapa cu lastuni [The sand martin ravine]	combined	IV	5.0
5	Divici - Pojejena	birds and fauna	IV	498.0
6	Valea Mare	botanic	IV	1179.0
7	The Water Cave in the Poleva Valley	combined	IV	3.2
8	Ostrovul Moldova Veche	birds and fauna	IV	1627.0
9	The Svinita fossiliferous location	paleontological	III	95.0
10	Cazanele Mari and Cazanele Mici	combined	IV	215.0
11	The Bahna fossiliferous location	paleontological	IV	10.0
12	The Duhovna Hill	forest	IV	50.0
13	Gura Vaii - Varciorova	combined	IV	305.0
14	Fata Virului	botanic	IV	6.0
15	Cracul Crucii	botanic	IV	2.0
16	The Varanic Hill	combined	IV	350.0
17	The Olganicului Valley	botanic	IV	150.0
18	Cracul Gaioara	botanic	IV	5.0

Source: The 2014-2020 Development Strategy of the Mehedinti County,

According to Government Decision 1284/2007, two special bird and fauna protection areas were declared on the territory of the Portile de Fier Natural Park as well, as an integral part of the NATURA 2000 European ecological network in Romania, i.e.

-ROSPA0026 the Danube Course - Bazias - Portile de Fier, with a surface of 10124.4 ha;

-ROSPA0080 The Almajului-Locvei Mountains, with a surface of 118141.6 ha.

Likewise, according to the Order of the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development no. 1964/2007, ROSCI0206 Portile de Fier was declared as a site of community interest, an integral part of the NATURA 2000 European ecological network, with a surface of 124293 ha. As of 2011 the Portile de Fier Natural Park has also been declared a RAMSAR site, an internationally important wetland.

The land types in the Portile de Fier Natural Park reflect the geological and rock structure, as the polarising element of touristic focus. The lithological diversity (crystalline, magmatic and sedimentary rocks) resulted in the individualisation of a highly complex landscape, with many spectacular elements (the Danube Gorges, calcar crests and slopes, breakwaters, caves, waterfalls, volcanic land - Trescovat, depressions, etc.)²⁵.

The *Glavacina and Munteana Formation* is represented by ferruginous oolitic calcar and marine sandstone, both with a rich fossil content of belemnites, bivalves, brachiopods and echinoderms. Such deposits generate a beautiful fold referred to as the "*suspended fold of Dumbravita*" to the South of the Munteana area, which can be best admired from the Serbian shore.

The *Trescovat Peak* is a remarkable volcanic neck (Lower Permian 280-240 million years), with an outstanding morphology and perfectly visible from both sides of the Danube. An impressive *amphitheatre* generated by jurassic conglomerates (200-176 million years) is located between the Zeliste and Veligan

²⁵ Popa M. E., 2003: *Geological heritage values in the Iron Gates Natural Park, Romania*, Proceeding of the First International Conference on Environmental Research and Assessment, March 23-27, p. 742-750, Bucharest.

peaks, above Svinita, on the Tiganului Valley. This amphitheatre is one of the most spectacular openings along the Danube Gorges.

The Saraorschi Valley is known as the Svinita paleontological reservation. This area is preserved for its highly valuable paleontological content and is one of the major paleontological reservations in the Meridional Carpathians. The site is represented by a succession of red jurassic calcar, very rich in ammonites and brachiopodes.

In Tricule, to the upstream of Svinita, the same Cioaca Borii formation generates a thick coast, the result of non-uniform layers. This coast is covered by a remarkable population of *black pine specific to the Banat region*.

Cazanele Mari and *Cazanele Mici* form the most impressive landscape in the Danube Gorges. The calcar area of the gorges is characterised by an exo-karstic and endo-karstic land in various degrees of evolution. Seven caves were identified in the calcar massive of Ciucaru Mare, of which the Ponicoava Cave is the most important and worth visiting. All this provided important information regarding the habitats in the Clisura in the upper paleolithic and the epipaleolithic.

The Bahna paleontological reservation is located on the territory of the Bahna commune, between Ilovita and Bahna. This site preserves the fauna in the Miocene (Badenian) (16 million years), with bivalves, gastropods and vertebrates. Fossil fauna is located in the Racovat Valley, the Lespezi Valley and the Curchiei Valley. It is here where we find Leitha calcars from red calcar algae rich in residues of corals, molluscs (*Venus*, *Turitella*, *Conus*, *Pecten*), echinids and foraminifera.

The park is populated by species of plants and animals having a major importance both for Romania and for Europe. For instance, the Cazane tulip is an endemic species, growing on the abrupt slopes of Ciucaru Mare (the Danube Gorges), which is why it is strictly protected by the law.

The rich flora discovered by prestigious botanists awarded to the Danube Gorges the prestige of European uniques²⁶. The flower diversity and unicity of the abrupt slopes in the area of the Danube Gorges always attract the attention of relevant specialists, favouring the development of scientific tourism. Of the other species of strictly protected plants in the park's area we remark: the prickly burweed, *Iris reichenbachii*, *Stipa danubialis* (on Cracul Gaioara, the only place in the world where this plant grows) or the Cazane bells.

The fauna elements of the park are diversified as well, with most species of reptiles, amphibians and birds being protected at a national and international level. Of these, we remind: scorpion, salamander, Hermann's tortoise, Caspian whipsnake, horned viper, species of bats, birds, etc.

The status of wetlands and of the birds and fauna existing in the park is due to the creation of the Portile de Fier I reservoir, resulting in the appearance of new wetlands, representing habitats for water birds. A large number of water birds can be seen during winter-spring on the lake's surface and the bordering wetlands: cormorants, herons, egrets, ducks, etc. Of the insects, butterflies are the most attractive.

The Mehedinti Plateau Geopark located in south-western Romania, to the North of Drobeta Turnu Severin, with a 106,000 ha surface, is a protected area of a national interest in the category of natural parks²⁷.

The temperate continental climate, with sub-Mediterranean influences, as well as the very varied land types created conditions for many species of rare plants and animals. The unique geological structure of this area resulted in the

²⁶ Matacă Sorina Ștefania, 2005: *Parcul Natural Porțile de Fier. Floră, vegetație și protecția naturii*, Universitaria Craiova, 550 pp., Drobeta Turnu Severin.

²⁷ www.sejmh.ro/sites/.../geoparc

appearance of many geological and speleological formations. Many of these values are protected in more than 17 protected natural areas.

The Mehedinti Plateau is represented by two land units located between the peak of the Mehedinti Mountains to the West and the Getic Piedmont to the East, characterised by a very similar geological and geographical evolution. The calcar dating back to the Jurassic-Cretacic belongs to the Danube autochthonous and is arranged in two main strips, parallel to one another. Even though they only take up 5% of the total area, calcar layers have generated many and diverse karst phenomena, that have made the Mehedinti Plateau famous.

Almost all the rivers coming from the West, from waterproof formations, are caught in the underground, at the access to the calcar bar. To the upstream of the catchment point, the valleys remain dry, forming antithetical steps along the times, such as the rivers Topolnita, Ponorat, Ponorel, etc. The most typical phenomenon of this kind is the *hydro-karst system* next to the Ponoarele commune, generating the Zaton and Ponoarele depressions. Except for depressions, other exo-karst forms are under-represented across the Mehedinti Plateau. However, one should not overlook the *dolines* to the West of Balta and Marga, and the *limestone pavements* and the *Natural Bridge from Ponoarele (God's Bridge)*²⁸.

Groundwater has caved many *caves*, famous in terms of size and beauty, such as Topolnita, Epuran, Bulba, Gramei, Isverna, etc.

A large part of the calcar in the Mehedinti Plateau and Mountains is not forested or is only covered in common hawthorn, European cornel, blackthorn, European smoketree, juniperus and lilac, combined with isolated beech trees. In many places, wild lilac forms genuine forests, with the ones on the Izverna, Nadanova or Ponoarele *cornete* being the most famous. This is where the "lilac's celebrations" are organised every year at the beginning of May, when the lilac blossoms.

The geographical individuality of the Mehedinti Plateau consists of the combination of mountain and hill features. It can be compared to mountains, to whom it bears a lithological resemblance (crystalline schists and mesozoic calcar), as well as in terms of land (narrow valleys, breakwaters), the presence of caves and tectonic fragmentation and, at the same time, to hills (low height, smooth peaks, many human settlements).

The unicity of the Mehedinti Plateau can also be seen in the dissemination and structure of vegetation. Through its geographical position, the unity is extended to the area of the *alternation between beech tree and common oak tee forests*. The temperat climate, with sub-Mediterranean influences, the average height of 500-600 m, the accidented land, the vicinity of the Balkan Peninsula, the lithological composition (large calcar areas) played a major part in the configuration of the current flower and cenotic structure of vegetation. *Sub-Mediterranean bushes* can be found on calcar rocks, also known as *sibleacs*, including a range of Carpathian-Balkan and South-European, thermophile sub-Mediterranean elements. The flowers on the pastures are also abundant in *souther, sub-Mediterranean elements*²⁹.

Pursuant to the diversity of life environments, the vegetation is accompanied by a rich and heterogeneous fauna, of different origins, mainly southern elements.

The mild climate, with sub-Mediterranean influences, as well as the specific vegetation are seen in the presence of many diverse reptiles and insects. The two fauna varities, the horned viper and Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo*

²⁸ Meilescu C., Sârbulescu C., Semen Carmen, Stîngă I., Matacă Sorina Ștefania, Popa A., Diaconu Florina, Meilescu Tania, 2004: *Geoparcul Platoul Mehedinți - Prezent și perspective*, Drobeta, Științele Naturii, vol. XIV, MJM, p. 193-198, Drobeta Turnu Severin.

²⁹ Ibidem.

hermanni) are specific; these sub-Mediterranean species are protected by law and are widely extended on the calcar to the South-West of the plateau. One can also see venomous and non-venomous serpents, with a species of small, but venomous scorpion on calcar areas.

Pursuant to the originality of its natural framework, the Mehedinti Plateau includes the most dense and varied natural reservations in a geographical unit of such size. Thus, more than 17 protected natural areas have been declared, such as: The karst complex in Ponoarele, the Ponoarele Lilac Forest, Cheile Cosuste, Cornetul Babelor and Cerboanei, Cornetul Baltii, Cheile Topolnitei and the Topolnitei Cave, Cornetul Vaii and Valea Manastirii, the well and rocks of Camana, the Calcar Walls of Izvoarele Cosuste and the Epuran Cave.

Due to the variety of exo-karst forms and underground networks, the Mehedinti Plateau Geopark is one of the most important karst regions in Romania. The geopark includes more than 200 caves (of which 4 of more than 3 km, all of them being declared reservations), culminating with the Topolnita Cave, whose 25 km make it one of the first 10 in Romania.

Landscaping sites:

- *Cornetul Baii and Valea Mănăstirii*, a botanic reservation to the South-East of Baia de Arama, where hazelnut tree forests are found, with prickly burweed and juniperus.

- *Cornetul Baltii*, a botanic reservation to the North-East of Balta, with a 30 ha surface, and sub-Mediterranean shrubs, of a touristic and scientific interest.

- *Cheile Cosuste*, a botanic reservation to the South-East of Balta, with a 50 ha surface. Of scientific and touristic interest.

- *Cornetul Babelor and Cerboanei*, a botanic reservation to the South of Izverna, with a 40 ha surface. *The Calcar Walls of Izvorul Cosuste*, a botanic reservation to the South-East of Izverna, with a 60 ha surface. Both sites are of scientific and touristic interest, due to sub-Mediterranean ecosystems.

- *The Borovat Forest*, a forest reservation located in Godeanu, 2.5 km to the North-West of Balotesti, on the left slope of the Topolnita Valley. The area is 30 hectares, where beech trees and black pines develop properly. The black pine variety specific to the Banat region originates from a natural regeneration, which is unique for this species in the Mehedinti county.

- *The Epuran Cave* is one of the most interesting speleological discoveries of the last quarter of the 20th century. It is found in Jupanesti, Ciresu.

- *The Topolnita Cave* was caved by three streams: Topolnita, Gaurinti and Ponorat. Topolnita is a warm cave (8.2^oC-10.8^oC), with a major interest for the variety of biotopes and elements making up the concerned biocenoses. Troglonit species are also found, skeletal remains of carnivores, insectivores and ruminants, as well as fossils of *Ursus spelaeus*.

- *Cheile Topolnitei*, a botanic reservation, with a 50 ha surface, is located to the South of Godeanu. Karst shapes are found, covered in beech tree forests, common oak and Turkey oak forests, Oriental hornbeam, shrubs of smoketree, lilac, mahaleb cherry, wayfarer, and at the exit of the cave we can see rare types of *Fritillaria montana*, which is considered a natural monument.

- *The Izverna Cave*, a speleological reservation located to the South of Izverna. This is where the largest karst well in Mehedinti rises.

- *The Forest on the Draghiceanu Mountain*, a botanic reservation to the South-East of Izverna, with plants such as Turkish hazel, walnut tree, manna ash, lilac.

- *The Mediterranean Shrubs of Izverna*, a botanic reservation to the North-East of Izverna. Of scientific and landscaping interest.

- *Cornetul Piatra Incalcata*, a botanic reservation to the North-East of Izverna, with sub-Mediterranean ecosystems. Of scientific, landscaping and touristic interest.

- *The Karst Well with the Rocks of Camana*, a botanic reservation to the North-East of Podeni. Of scientific and landscaping interest.

- *The Lilac Forest in Ponoarele* is the only resort in the country that has been preserved, due to the wet and mild climate of the depression that is protected by the peaks of Mehedinti.

- *The Karst Complex of Ponoarele*, a complex reservation located 5 km to the South-East of Baia de Arama. This is where the most diverse and original karst phenomena in our country are found: caves, dry valleys, limestone pavements, a natural arcade forming the Ponoarele natural bridge. The Ponoarele reservation has a 100 ha surface and it has been declared a natural monument due to its scientific importance.

The Domogled-Valea Cernei National Park³⁰ established in 1990 is located to the South-West of Romania and covers the surface of 3 counties, i.e. Caras-Severin, Mehedinti and Gorj. It covers 8220 ha in Mehedinti.

From a geographical point of view, the Park covers the basin of the Cerna river, from its spring to the confluence with Belareca, over the Godeanu Mountains and the Cernei Mountains on the right slope and the Valcanului Mountains and Mehedinti Mountains on the left slope.

The diversity of landscapes (abrupt calcar slopes with black pine specific to the Banat region, canyons with streams with a highly fluctuating flow, calcar peaks with sub-Mediterranean vegetation, extended forests of old beech trees, creeping pines, mountain reservoirs, breakwaters and calcar precipices, isolated settlements, subalpine pastures with limestone pavements), thermal caves that are unique in Romania, thermo-mineral springs, endemisms and rare flora and fauna provide all nature enthusiasts with unique experiences.

The park is characterised by a remarkable flower diversity, with 1110 species of vascular (superior) plants. Of these, some exist only here and are not known in other parts of the country: *Vicia truncatula*, *Tragopogon balcanicus*, *Cerastium banaticum*, *Lamium bithynicum*.

Due to bio-geographical, biological and climatic elements, the Park hosts a very rich and interesting fauna, with many species of animals of a high scientific value, some of which are even unique in the country or in the world, and excels in the variety of insects. This is where the largest biodiversity of lepidoptera is found, with almost 1500 species of butterflies (1463), 45% of the lepidoptera in the country being concentrated here.

The natural protected area ROSPA 0011 Blahnița. The protected area is made by superimposing several protected areas: ROSPA0011 Blahnița, ROSCI0173 Stârmina Forest, ROSCI0306 Jiana, the area that partly overlaps with the ROSCI0306 Jiana belonging to ROSPA0046 Gruia-Gârla Mare, protected areas of national interest: 2,605. Forest Bunget and 2612. Stârmina forest and wetland Hinova- Ostrovul Corbului of county protection regime declared by Resolution no. 13 / 07.10.2000 regarding the completion of Resolution no. 26/1994 of Mehedinti County Council. Since 2013, ROSPA0011 Blahnița is designated a Ramsar site³¹.

The Balvanesti Forest is a forest area of a social and recreational interest, with species of black pine specific to the Banat region, protected by law.

The Starmina Forest, a protected area of a national interest in the category of forest reservations, is located in Hinova.

The Lunca Vanjului natural reservation - a wetland forest including oaks, ashes, tatar maples. Lilies-of-the-valley grow in herbaceous forests, among others.

The values in the Blahnita, Starmina Forest, Jiana, Bunget Forest protected areas are highly important, and their maintenance guarantees the required resources for the harmonious development of local communities. Even though the

³⁰ <http://www.domogled-cerna.ro>

³¹ http://www.mmediu.ro/app/webroot/uploads/files/2016-03-24_Plan_Management_Blahnita.pdf

area is highly anthropic, the coordinated efforts of those who live there may help maintain the characteristic landscape of this region, ensuring the minimal resources and natural processes required for proper and balanced living and development conditions.

1.3.5. The Anthropic Touristic Potential

All touristic resources resulting from human creation at a cultural and historical, as well as technical and economic level in the county, considered to have touristic value or as the existence basis for tourism represent the anthropic potential.

Currently existing anthropic touristic sights were erected by people to other purposes, but they became "touristic potential" gradually, as they became representative for a certain region or historical, social, cultural or technical phase. Meeting these requirements, they refresh the visitor's social memory. The Portile de Fier I and II water power plants and navigation systems are also representative. The water power plant at Portile de Fier I is the largest in Romania, generating 50% of the country's water power.

The anthropic heritage is completed by historical monuments, archaeological vestiges, popular architecture monuments across the entire county, 569 heritage sights in total according to the Ministry of Culture.

Drobeta Turnu Severin, the capital of the Mehedinti county. The city is located to the South-West of Mehedinti, to the western-most part of Oltenia, on the left river of the Danube, as the river exits the gorges. To the upstream, the Danube connects Severin to Belgrade, Budapest and Vienna, and to the Black Sea to the downstream. Severin has an open window towards all horizons. The city is the meeting point of the Timis-Cerna Corridor, of the Mehedinti Plateau, of the Subcarpathian Depression in Oltenia and the Oltenia Plain.

The Drobeta Turnu Severin modern city is relatively new compared to other Romanian cities. It appeared on the map of the country and of the world pursuant to General Pavel Kiseleff's decree of April 22, 1833. The city got its name from the majestic ruins of the Severin Fortress that dominated the Danube and the surroundings at that time. Since the city was born on April 22, around the religious celebration of Saint George (April 23), the inhabitants chose the latter as the spiritual patron of the city.

Historical vestiges:

- *The medieval Fortress of Severin* was the most important strategic redoubt on the Danube, and its conquest meant a bridge end in the region and the possibility to advance towards new conquests. At the end of the 13th century, King Stephen of Hungary fought five wars with the Bulgarian Tsar to defend the Fortress of Severin.

- *The Roman Castrum in Drobeta* is the first stone fortress in Roman Dacia. A scene on Trajan's Column presenting the inauguration of the bridge (spring of 105) shows the already built castrum.

- *Trajan's Bridge in Drobeta* was the largest bridge in the world built in the antiquity. The greatness and technical ingenuity of the construction amazed and still amaze nowadays. It was built in a record time, in only three years (103-105), in the time lapse between the two Dacian wars. The best reconstitution of Trajan's bridge in Drobeta was performed by the French engineer Edgar Duperrex in 1906.

- *The Thermae of Drobeta* are the most complicated thermal installations in Lower Dacia. Besides the usual equipment of thermae, such as the fire room (praefurnium), the steam room (laconicum), the bathroom (caldarium), the cold water room (frigidarium) et al., reading rooms and an area for exercise and sports competitions, palestra, were found to the North.

- *The ruins of the Severin Metropolis (14th century) , of which we have only been left with the foundations of a church shaped as a rectangular ship, ending with a polygonal apse with five abutments. The crypt of the church is added to the northern side of the ship.*

Cultural institutions:

- *The Museum of the Portile de Fier region, in a modern organisation, as an exhibition and storage areas, was inaugurated on May 15, 1972, as the city celebrated 1850 years of attestation as a municipality. Initially opened with two sections, Aquarium-Natural Sciences and History-Archaeology, it will be thereafter developed through the permanent exhibitions of folkloric art and ethnography of Mehedinti (1982) and the plastic art exhibition, hosted in a separate building, a representative building for the architecture of Severin (1890). As of 2010 the Museum of the Portile de Fier region is under implementation of the project "Reabilitarea, modernizarea Muzeului Regiunii Porțile de Fier și valorificarea lui ca produs turistic" [Rehabilitation, improvement of the Museum of the Portile de Fier region and its use as a touristic product] and is closed for visits.*

- *The Art Museum built around 1890 in an eclectic baroque style, a department of the Museum of the Portile de Fier region, is the most representative architecture monument of Drobeta Turnu Severin. The building hosts a rich collection of paintings, sculptures and contemporary decorative art, exhibited in many thematic contexts.*

- *The Th. Costescu Cultural Palace is an emblematic architectural building of Drobeta Turnu Severin, initiated and built through the efforts of the "Teatrul Orasului T. Severin" Association, in order to primarily, but not exclusively host such an institution here.*

- *The I. G. Bibicescu County Library was established in 1921, financed by I.G. Bibicescu, from Mehedinti, a culture scholar and governor of the National Bank during 1914-1924. It is the richest library collection ever donated by a Romanian, with more than 30,000 volumes (books and periodicals), supplemented by an extremely rare coin collection provided by the donor.*

- *The Radu Negru Hall in June 1903, the Turnu Severin municipality published the tender book for the construction of the hall in the Radu Negru Square, a project endorsed by Anghel Saligny on behalf of the Upper Technical Council of Bucharest.*

- *The Traian National College. In 1862, the city council decided to establish a gymnasium. It was opened on September 1, 1883, when it began to work with 79 pupils and two teachers (M.N.Hergot and Stefan Bodiu).*

Artistic monuments:

- *The Water Castle built in a medieval style is emblematic for the inhabitants of Severin, providing the city with identity due to its central location. The Water Castle, emblematic building of Drobeta Turnu Severin, was built by the engineer Elie Radu, to supply water for the town. The construction was done according to the project approved by the Communal Council, on 10 June 1910. The construction was completed in 1913, but the inauguration took place in 1914, when it was put into operation the city's water supply system, the water supply being done directly off the Danube. The building with multiple functions is conceived as a sequence of vertically spaces in order to house a tourist information centre, an exhibition and art gallery space, the museum "History of the water supply for Drobeta Turnu Severin", a photo and sculpture exhibition, a literary café and belvedere area.*

- *The Monument for the Heroes in the 1st World War was inaugurated on June 4, 1933. Located in the Rozelor Park, the building was erected during 1928-1933 and is an homage to the Romanian soldiers who died in the First World War.*

- *Decebal's Statue* and *Trajan's Statue* located in the Central Park in front of the Administrative Palace.

- *The Circular Walk of Personalities* - statues of outstanding people from the city, who left a mark on the development of the Danube city, were placed in the Crisan street.

Religious venues: the Grecescu Church, the Maioreasa Church, the Roman-Catholic Cathedral, the New Church, the Synagogue.

Parks: the Rozelor Park, the General Dragalina Garden (with the Severin Fortress), the park of the Drobeta archaeological complex. Parks are full of elegant alleys, with rows of chestnut trees along the Carol I boulevard, while the central park (English style) is adorned with monuments, with the artesian fountain.

The anthropic heritage of the Portile de Fier Natural Park. The history of population of this area, as well as its outstanding strategic importance helped develop and maintain cultural facilities of a national or regional significance³².

The Vodita Monastery was built from 1370 to 1372 about 500 m away from the Danube, close to the border between the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and Wallachia. The ruins of the old church can also be seen now, with a wood church and a touristic shelter being built next to it in 1995.

The Sf. Ana Monastery was patroned by Pamfil Seicaru, the renowned inter-war journalist, knight of the "Mihai Viteazul" Order, being located in the close vicinity of Orsova, on the Mosului Hill.

The Strehaia Monastery: disbanded by the Secularization Law of the monastery estates in 1863, the Strehaia monastery remained a parish church until 1958 when it was given in use the new church of the village Strehaia.

The ensemble of the Strehaia Monastery, consisting of the historical monument church, the palace cellars, foundations of old cells and the inner wall of the ancient medieval fortress, is nominated in Law 5/2000, section III, protected areas, as historical objective of national interest with exceptional value.

The monastery is a few dozen meters from the E70 European road linking Timisoara to Bucharest.

The Mraconia Monastery. An old monastery, referred to as Mracona, was located on the Orsova-Moldova Noua national road, in the Mraconiei Valley. The old venue was hidden in a picturesque place in front of the former Trajan road on the Serbian shore, where "Tabula Traiana" was located. The new Mraconia Monastery has been erected nowadays.

The Roman-Catholic Cathedral of Orsova is located in the central part of Orsova, in the close vicinity of the 1800 Market, with a dominant position, that allows to observe it from various sides. It was built during 1972-1976.

The Tri Kule Fortress was erected in the 15th century, and its ruins can also be observed now close to Svinita. The fortress was represented by three towers located on the Danube shore, in a triangle shape. The Tri Kule Fortress was flooded when the Portile de Fier I reservoir was arranged, with only two towers being observed at the surface.

The Ladislau Fortress was built on the left shore of the Danube, mentioned from the 14th century, with a strategic role, and dedicated to traffic control on the Danube. The paired fortress on the Serbian shore is the Golubac Fortress, much better preserved than the Ladislau Fortress.

³² Matacă Ștefania Sorina, Diaconu Florina, Crăciunescu G., Marinescu Roxana, Florescu Gh., 2008: *Peisaje danubiene transfrontaliere. Ghid turistic*, 150pp., Drobeta Turnu Severin.

Decebal's Figure carved in stone is located at the mouth of Mraconia into the Danube, with a height of 40 m and a width of 25 m. The initiative of its accomplishment belongs to the multi-billionaire Iosif Constantin Dragan, founder of the European Dragan Foundation.

The Gaura Chindiei II Cave. The Gaura Chindiei II cave opens in the Coronini - Alibeg strait. It is an archaeological reservation where wall art traces were discovered belonging to the paleolithic and neolithic, as well as traces in the proto-dacic and dacic period.

The *Veterani Cave* is known from ancient times, being established by the Dacians as the sanctuary of Zamolxis.

The Dacian fortress and settlement of Divici is a proof of the Dacian inhabitation of this space, as the site has a national importance, being recognized as national heritage based on Law no. 5/2000 on the approval of the Plan for the Arrangement of the National Territory - Protected Areas Section.

Of this area we mention the Collection of icons and religious items of Eselnita, the ethnographic collection of Eselnita, the Garnic ethnographic and archaeological museum and the Museum of the Portile de Fier I power plant.

The Museum of the Portile de Fier I Water Power Plant opened in 1976 presents the general features of the Danube, hydrological data, material testimonies of the human settlements in the area. Some of the researches of the complex team of the Romanian Academy undertaken in the area of the future Portile de Fier I reservoir were presented in the exhibition.

The area of the Portile de Fier Gorges has been inhabited from the paleolithic. Research has established that two new archaeological cultures developed here: Schela Cladovei in the epipaleolithic and the Banului Island in the first iron age. The exhibition shows that these human communities have inhabited the area since 30 000 years ago, which is proven by abundant ceramic belonging to various archaeological cultures. The fire weapons present in the exhibition suggest the fight of the local population, helped by many fortresses against the invaders.

A part of the Portile de Fier area was disputed by the two large empires of that time: the Habsburg Empire and the Ottoman Empire. To this purpose, the Austrians built a Vauban-type fortress on the Ada-Kaleh island, but the island went to the Ottoman Empire and a Turkish community settled here. Until the island was flooded by the Portile de Fier I reservoir, the population worked in tourism, with rose and fig jam, turkish locum and cigarettes being the most sought products. In remembrance of Ada-Kaleh, a Turkish interior with representative items for the Turkish population of this island located at the interference between the Habsburg Empire and the Ottoman Empire was arranged.

The museum contains traditional costumes from the Portile de Fier area and a water mill, considered the ancestor of the Pelton modern turbine.

The Portile de Fier Gorges is considered an open air geological museum. We have to remark the typical rocks of the Portile de Fier area, such as: Gura Vaih sandstone, the urgonian calcar in the Danube Gorges, the Ogradena granite, the luti gabbro, Tisovitsa and Plavishevitsa serpentines. Due to its bird and fauna abundance, the course of the Danube in the Portile de Fier area is classified as a Natura 2000 site. The travel to the Museum of the Portile de Fier I Power Plant ends as we go down to the Turbine Hall.

The Anthropic Heritage of the Mehedinti Plateau Geopark. Stepping to the Mehedinti Plateau, we have the opportunity to perceive the material rhythms of time. The perenne living in this realm was proven by the archaeological excavations unveiling traces of civilisation dating back to the neolithic and belonging to the Cotofeni culture (Ciresu, Bunoaica village, Jupanesti). Traces of Dacian settlements from the 4th-1st centuries B.C. (Balta, Bala de Sus, Malovat), testimonies of Roman settlements (Sisesti, Craguisti) and medieval venues (the

Gradetului Fortress, 13th century, 2 km to the East of Balotesti) were discovered in various areas of the Mehedinti Plateau.

The oldest attestation of a settlement in the Mehedinti Plateau is 1581, Baia de Arama, where the *Tudor Vladimirescu Monument* sculpted by Constantin Balacescu is found. Folkloric architecture monuments can be found everywhere: churches, chapels, traditional homes or mills.

The high number of churches, most of them wooden, prove the people's need to be close to God. The oldest religious venue is Schitul Topolnitei, built in the 16th century and painted in 1673.

The oldest wooden church dates back to 1757 and is located in Brebina, in the Baia de Arama area (*the wooden church devoted to the Saint Apostles*, erected in 1757 and redone in 1845). Other old churches can be found in: Godeanu – the wooden church devoted to St. Nicholas (1766), the wooden church devoted to the Holy Voivodes (1783-1786), Gornovita – the wooden church devoted to St. Stephen (1796-1799), Prejna – the wooden church devoted to the Dormition of Mary and built by order of Tudor Vladimirescu (1808), etc.

A village, as a basic element of the Mehedinti Plateau Geopark, is a specific result of social and historical evolution. The traditional lifestyle can be kept in time by preserving rural settlements. Ethnographic sites can be found in the Mehedinti Plateau in villages such as Balta (18th-19th century), Costesti (19th century), Prejna (19th century). Likewise, we can find many homes with a traditional architecture that have been classified as monuments, dating back to the 19th and 20th century, such as the Untaru Dumitru house (1885), the Popescu C. house (1940) of Jupanesti, the Patru Nicu house of Crainici (1898), the Nicolescu Ion house of Balta (1898), the Epuran Gheorghe house (1870), the Dumitru Andrei house (1850), the Zamfiroiu Gheorghe house (1860) of Ciresu, Bunoaica, the Brehui Ghita house with basement of Sisesti, Ciovarnasani (1880), etc.

The anthropic heritage of the Green Danube Corridor (from Simian to Salcia). The area includes many archaeological evidence from the iron age, the Roman period to the Middle Ages.

Facing the Simian commune, 2 km away from Drobeta Turnu Severin as one drives to Craiova, we can see, in the middle of the Danube, the Simian Island, where the 17th century Turkish fortress of the Ada Kaleh island was relocated, prior to being flooded by the Portile de Fier reservoir.

After Aurelian's withdrawal, the left shore of the Danube became populated by a complex of quadriburgum-type fortresses, such as those in Hinova (castrum), Batoti, Tismana, Izvorul Frumos, Izvoarele. It should be underlined that all these fortresses are posts of the late Roman domination in the former province of Dacia.

The Villa rustica in Garla Mare, the Roman agricultural farm created after Dacia's establishment as a province, is located to the South of the village. Archaeological research suggests that the farm's owner could be a veteran of Dacian-Roman wars. The farm seems to be an independent business unit, that manufactured most of its requirements of ceramic products, as well as iron and lead, providing animals for food, as well as agricultural activities.

Architecture monuments in the Green Danube Corridor are concentrated in Cerneti, a former county capital until 1833: *the Holy Trinity Church, the St. Nicholas and St. Spiridon Church, the St. John the Baptist Church, the Church of the Dormition of Mary, Nistor's Cula, the Tudor Vladimirescu Cula*. The latter is an almost square building (12.5 x 11.5 m), with two levels: ground floor and a first floor, erected by Tudor Vladimirescu, who had significant properties in Cerneti - vineyard, orchard. The Cula also played a major part in the revolutionary events of 1821, being prepared as a place of retreat and fight in case of defeat by the Turks.

- *Tudor Vladimirescu's monument*, raised on June 29, 1914 at the initiative of the Association of Romanian Primary Teachers. The design is by Vladimir Miorescu, and the bas-relief is carved by I. Iodanescu. The components of the monument were performed in Drobeta Turnu Severin, and the bronze was cast in the workshops of C.F.R. Turnu Severin. The blocks for the pedestal, weighing 3000 kg each, are taken from Gura Vaii.

The following are also found in the area: *the Church of the St. Apostles Peter and Paul* (Erghevita); *the Church of the Ascension* (Bistrita); *the St. George Church* (Hinova); *the St. George Church* (Dunărea Mică); *the Church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit* (Garla Mare); *the St. Catherine and St. Calinic Church* (Salcia).

The Strehaia town is located to the East of the county, with the ruins of the Prince's Court (17th century) and the Strehaia Monastery church built in 1645 under the reign of Matei Basarab, on an older foundation, with unknown origins.

1.3.5.1. Traditional Customs, Activities and Installations

- **Traditional customs:** fishing with nets and cast nets - Svinita

- **Specific farming activities:** agriculture, animal growing (goats, sheep, cows), fishing with nets, collecting fruit (figs, berries, wild strawberries, blackberries, rosehips)

- **Traditional installations:** the mills of *Tiganski Ogas, Vodenicki Ogas, Povalina, Staristea, Valea Iutului, Elisova* with a unique aspect due to the presence of several stones of different thicknesses, changed with the bucket.

Traditional crafts are still present in the Mehedinti Plateau: weaving wool carpets, painting wool with natural colour agents, pottery (Sisesti, Noaptesa ceramic), etc. A range of settlements on the plateau have been known for their non-ferrous minerals from the antiquity. Copper exploitations in the Ponoarele - Baia de Arama are attested ever since the ruling of Mircea the Old. Jurassic calcar - Ciresu, Baia de Arama, Ponoarele, Balta - is used for manufacturing cement, lime, as construction materials.

1.3.5.2. The Event Calendar

Most settlements in Mehedinti host traditional events related to various religious or laic events on an annual basis: the Martisor Ball (Ilovita, February 28); the Turks' Ball (Belobresca, Svinita, February 27, Sichevita, March 2); the Izmenelor Ball (Ilovita, February 28); the Village's Sons (Ilovita, the last Sunday of July); the Fig Festival (Svinita); the Festival of Danube Villages (Svinita, May 1-2); the Sports Festival (Svinita, May 1-2); the Musical Festival of Minorities (Svinita, August), the Liubcova School Day (Liubcova, September), the Minorities' Festival (Bigar); the "Ponoare, Ponoare" Festival; the Plaiului Closani Festival; the folkloric festival "Munte, munte, brad frumos"; the folk music festival-competition "Constantin Gherghina"; the "Oale si sarmale" festival of ceramics from Oltenia; the Vine and Wine Festival; the Acacia Celebration; the Celebration of the Topolnita Cave; Puppet theatre competition for children (Belobresca); the *Nedei*, with different dates for every community and related to a church's saint, etc.

The *Izmenelor Ball* is a parade - a competition of folkloric costumes, where prizes are awarded for the best costume, the best pair and the ball queen. The name comes from the slim-fit trousers ("izmene") worn by all the participants. The event appeared in 1996 in Ilovita, being taken from the area of Banat, as Ilovita is located at the interference of Banat with Mehedinti³³.

³³ Chicet I., 1998: Calendarul popular al Mehedințului, RĂSTIMP – Revistă de cultură și tradiție populară, year I, No 1, Jan-Feb 1998, p. 24

The ancient customs and habits of the people in Mehedinti living in the Mehedinti Plateau are many and original. They are related to various moments of life: birth - marriage - burial. Other habits are related to the anniversaries to Orthodox saints, that are awarded special significance by the people: St. John's Baptism (January 6), the Holy Martyrs of Sevastia (March 9), St. George the Martyr (April 23), Easter, etc. Each religious event is accompanied by specific popular celebrations, fully lived by the rural communities of the Mehedinti Plateau.

Lilac shrubs are abundant on the Cosustei and Topolnitei valleys, as the locals observe the annual traditional celebration of lilac, in the first decade of May, in Ponoarele, Balta și Nadvanov.

The best known cultural events in Drobeta Turnu Severin are the Severin Days organised around St. George's Day - the spiritual patron of the city, and the Severin Autumn, at the beginning of October.

Other opportunities to promote local cultural values and traditions are the events mostly organised by local authorities for the days of the corresponding towns.

1.4 The Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Vidin Area

1.4.1 The Morphological Touristic Potential

The touristic potential of the Vidin district is provided by the diverse relief including hills in the Danube Plain, Pre-Balkan, Old Balkans and the Vidin-Archar-Orsoika coast areas. The Rabishka hills and the Belogradchik peaks, of calcar and crossed by the affluents of the Lom river, are the best known from a touristic point of view.

The rocks of Belogradchik are the most famous natural touristic sight in Bulgaria. One can practice sports tourism, hiking, cycling tourism, paintball here. Two ecological touristic routes include visits to various sights in the area.

Of the most attractive karst forms on this side of the Pre-Balkans we mention the Magura Cave, unique through the beauty of its rocks and its pre-historical cultural value. The cave is one of the one hundred major touristic sights of Bulgaria and, with the forest in the area, it represents an outstanding touristic sight.

1.4.2 The Touristic Potential of Climate

The geographical position of the Vidin district results in a temperate continental climate, with quite cold winters and hot summers, with low rain.

Maximum temperature is recorded in July and minimum temperature in January, with an annual average temperature of 11.2 °C. The fact that snow lasts more in the mountain areas during winter results in a wetter climate, favouring the development of forest vegetation.

1.4.3 The Bio-geographical Touristic Potential

The Chuprene Biosphere Reservation is located on the territory of Belogradchik and Chuprene and covers 1439.2 hectares. The reservation is a public property maintained by the Ministry of Environment and Water.

In 1977, the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organisation - UNESCO includes it on its list of protected national areas and is an inseparable part of the international network of biosphere reservations, including territories where human impact on the environment is assessed.

The main purpose is to preserve a single compact forest of spruce tree in the Western Balkans, in its primary condition. The reservation also host beech trees (*Fagus sylvatica*), fir trees (*Abies*), globeflower (*Trollius europaeus*). Representative animals in this reservation are the common European viper (*Vipera berus*), the western capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*), the red crossbill (*Loxia*

curvirostra), the hazel grouse (*Tetrastes bonasia*), the red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), the wolf (*Canis lupus*), etc.

Any kind of actions infringing the distinctive natural character are forbidden in the reservation.

The natural monument of the Rocks of Belogradchik is declared a unique geo-morphological formation, that also serves as habitat of rare species of flora and fauna, in danger of extinction. It has a large area, about 30 km long and 3 km wide, to the west of the Balkans and around Belogradchik. Multiple rock formations have been carved by nature across the centuries, in red sandstone, with fabulous shapes, in synchrony with the surrounding biodiversity (more than 23 protected species of plants and more than 15 protected species of animals), awarding Belogradchik a unique beauty. The efforts made in this area regarding the promotion of this important natural resource, also at an international level, as well as for increasing ecological culture and education, helped develop the green tourism.

The Magura Cave natural monument is a natural monument with interesting pre-historical formations and discoveries. The cave is located in the Rabisha village, Belogradchik municipality. The Magura Cave is one of the largest (more than 30 000 sqm) and most beautiful caves in Bulgaria. Here, one can see naturally formed "halls", galleries, fantastic formations, very large stalagmites and stalactites (20 m high and more than 4 m diameter) resembling people, waterfalls, animals, etc. It is famous for its pre-historical drawings, dating back to the epipaleolithic to the beginning of the Bronze Age, whereby the cave is subject to special UNESCO patronage, having the international status of cultural monument. Similar drawings to those in the Magura Cave have only been discovered in three other places - France, Spain, Siberia.

Full of a mysterious beauty, it has served as shelter for protected species of fauna - more than 5 species of bats and cave-specific non-vertebrates. The cave hosts fossils that prove that the place was inhabited by pre-historical animals: bears, hyenas, wild horses.

The Borov Chamac - waterfall natural monument: a rock formation (red sandstone) with a 1.3 ha surface, located in the eponymous place next to the Borovitsa village and bordering the Belogradchik Rocks. It was declared a monument in order to protect the outstanding geological and botanic sites, cultural, scientific and touristic venues.

The Levi I Desni Suhi peci - cave natural monument: is located around Dolni Lom, municipality of Chuprene and covers 0.2 hectares. It is characterised by many calcareous formations, underground lakes, colonies of cave bats. Visits to the cave are forbidden, so that the natural monument should not be destroyed.

The Venetsa - cave natural monument located in Chiucara, next to Oraset, municipality of Dimovo, currently a quarry where no work is performed. Rock formations are very beautiful. Visits are forbidden to ensure protection.

The waterfall of the Stakevska river in Byalata voda natural monument: the waterfall is located in a pine tree forest in Byalata voda, next to Stakevtsi, municipality of Belogradchik and covers 1.6 hectares. Hidden up in the Balkans, the beautiful waterfall completes the virgin natural landscape of the area.

The Petkov tserak waterfall natural monument: the waterfall is located next to the Boinitsa village. It is more than 6 metres high. The waterfall is remarkable, a genuine rarity, and stands out with its natural beauty³⁴.

1.4.4 The Anthropic Touristic Potential

The following are some of the most important historical and cultural sites in the Vidin district:

³⁴ http://www.vidin.government.bg/094/60-16-16/sidebar/oblast_vidin/zabelejitelnosti.html

The *Baba Vida Fortress* is one of the best kept medieval defence citadels in Bulgaria. The foundation of the medieval castle was erected towards the end of the 10th century, above the ruins of the ancient fortress of Bononia. The main construction began sometime during the second Bulgarian kingdom (end of the 12th-14th century). During the Ottoman domination, the fortress was rebuilt several times, also at the end of the 17th century until the beginning of the 19th century.

Access to the fortress is only possible at the North, where the entry tower is located, with a very deep ditch being caved to the other side. The fortress has a surface of 9.5 ares. The castle is surrounded by a defence ditch, which was filled with water from the Danube in the past. A mobile bridge went down above the ditch, defended by the guards in the entry tower.

As of 1958, the castle has been opened for visits, also hosting a museum. A summer theatre is located in this fortress (350 places). The castle has been a natural setting for films (more than 50 Bulgarian and foreign movies have been shot in the castle and around it), theatre plays, as well as other cultural events.

The *Baba Vida Fortress* is a cultural monument of a national value, ranked among the first 100 national touristic sights of Bulgaria.

The Kaleto defence walls - for the additional reinforcement of the Vidin city, which was the border point of the Ottoman Empire after 1718; the so-called Kale – reinforcement walls surrounding the entire town is built during 30 years (1690-1720). They represent half a circle with a 1600 m diameter along the Danube and a double stone wall to the river.

A 5-6 m deep and 18 m wide ditch is caved to the land, built with stone and filled with water. Kaleto had 9 entrances (kapias). Some of the gates of the fortress, the northern half of the ditch and small parts of walls have been maintained so far. The main gates of the wall have been preserved - Florentin, Enichiar, Pazar and Stambol. They represent curved passages whose walls have guard rooms. They were closed with double gates of iron-covered oak beams. Mobile wooden bridges were used to cross the ditches. Access to the Danube was possible through 5 other gates: Aralak, Top, Sarai, Telegraf, Siurgiu (the first and the last one are walled). The reinforcement wall is kept up to the Telegraf gate.

After Kaleto was built, Vidin was not conquered by the enemy during war. Kaleto and the preserved gates are a cultural monument of a national importance.

The Kaleto-Belogradchik Roman fortress - the remaining ruins show at least three construction periods: Roman and Byzantine - from the 1st to the 6th century, Byzantine and Bulgarian - from the 7th to the 14th century, Ottoman - from 1805 to 1837.

As the Romans get settled on the southern shore of the Danube, they build reinforcement walls that also include the Belogradchik rocks. They used the inaccessibility of the rocks and raised two walls to the North-West and the South-East. Massive rocks, 80-100 m high, can be found surrounding the fortress in the two other directions. Constructions from the last reinforcement period, accomplished by the sultan Mahmud II, prevail now. They include three yards with reinforcement walls (each of which can defend independently).

In fact, they were divided into two fortresses: a large, rectangular-shaped one, and a small one, approached through a narrow path. Supports for weapons are carved into reinforcement walls (10 m high). The fortress had 15-16 towers. Interior constructions included barracks, storage areas, arsenals, prison, mills for salt and wheat, 4 water tanks. As a military unit, the fortress is used in the Serbian-Bulgarian war in 1885.

The Kastru Martis-Kula Roman fortress is a late Roman fortress whose ruins are found in the centre of the Kula town. It is built at the end of the 3rd century and the beginning of the 4th century as a part of the defence of the Roman Empire's Danube border. The fortress had a key position in the western-most mountain passage Vrashka Ciuca and guarded the important Roman road of

Singhidunum (Belgrade). It has two parts that are not built together. A museum with exhibits found during archaeological excavations is today located next to the ruins of the castle.

The Koluka Turkish Mansion is built in the second half of the 18th century. The Turks used the building as a police department, and the Bulgarian religious community settled in the building around the 1870s. After Release, it is rebuilt and elements of Bulgarian Renaissance architecture are introduced. As of 1956, the building has functioned as a museum where one can see the history of Vidin and the Vidin district from the antiquity to the Release (1878).

Osman Pazvantoglu's Mosque is found in the Danube Park, in front of the Vidin Metropolis. It was built during 1800-1801. The mosque is made of massive stone, with Oriental architecture. Its porch is designed as an open gallery. The prayer hall is very large and is decorated with a wooden ceiling. The minaret ends with a point shaped as a turned-over heart.

It is a monument of national importance.

Osman Pazvantoglu's Libray is located next to Osman Pazvantoglu's Mosque. Its construction was completed during 1802-1803. It represents a four-sided prism, covered by a cupola. It is dedicated to the father of Osman Pazvantoglu, who was killed at the sultan's orders. The library included 2664 books, of which 2014 were delivered to Turkey and 650 are located in the St. Cyril and Methodius National Library of Sofia.

The cross-shaped barracks were built during 1800-1801 to cover the needs of the Ottoman army in the city and was connected to the weapon workshop through a roofed wooden bridge. The garden of the old Sarai lied there before and it had been a mansion for soldiers. It is a building of massive stone, with a built area of 1260 sqm. It is shaped as a cross with equal arms. After the Release, it served as court of justice and barracks for the Bulgarian army. In 1965-1967, the building is refurbished and adapted as a museum. As of 1969, ethnographic exhibitions are presented, showing the traditional culture of the people in Vidin from the end of the 19th century to the 1920s.

Antim I's Mausoleum is the mausoleum of the first Bulgarian patriarch, Antim I, and is located in the grad of the Vidin Metropolis. The walls of the room are decorated and bear the stone sculptures of the first Bulgarian Exarch. The basement hosts the tomb with the remains of the Exarch Antim I.

The St. Pantelimon church is in the yard of the Vidin Metropolis. The church exists from the first half of the 17th century and was painted in 1644. The St. Pantelimon church is a national artistic monument.

The St. Petka church exists from the first half of the 17th century. Based on Ottoman border laws for seizure and adaptation to military purposes, all Christian constructions close to military facilities are turned into warehouses and used to this purpose until the release.

The Sf. V. M. Dimitar Cathedral was built in the 17th century, mostly from wood. The temple lasted for about 240 years. The first service in Bulgarian language was first held on December 6, 1868. Afterwards, this church turns into the cathedral of Antim, the Vidin metropolitan, who is thereafter elected as the first Bulgarian exarch. The temple was demolished in 1889, because the wood got old, and the construction of the new temple begins. In 1926, the temple was solemnly sanctified by the metropolitan Neofit of Vidin. The Sf. V. M. Dimitar Cathedral is the second largest one after the temple-monument St. Aleksandar Nevsk of Sofia.

The cathedral is a monument of national importance.

The *synagogue* is close to the Danube Park. The building was built in one year, in 1894, with the help of all the Jews in Bulgaria. It is the second in size after the one in Sofia, and the main facade is impressive. As of 1950, the

construction lost its main function and was used as a warehouse, which led to its current precarious condition.

It is a monument of national importance.

The old Turkish post office was built in the second half of the 19th century, especially for mailing needs. It was probably completed in 1859, when Vidin connects to various European towns via telegraph. The building is massive, with two floors and treasury at the basement. It is the only old post office that was maintained in Bulgaria. It is located in the Danube Park, close to the Mosque and to Osman Pazvantoglu's Library.

The Vidin Municipal Theatre is a 2-storeyed building, built in 1891, the first building of the released Bulgaria, specially designed for theatre. It lies at the entrance to the Danube Park³⁵.

The Dobridolski Monastery, founded in the 11th century, burned down in the 15th century. It was restored in 1860. The church of the monastery is an interesting image of a Renaissance-styled building. Its body is cross-shaped. The church has no paintings.

The rock monastery in Albutin is located 21 km away from Vidin, and its name comes from the eponymous disappeared village. The monastery and its parts form a chain.

The Izvorski Monastery is located 2 km to the South of Izvor, Dimovo. It is believed to have been founded in the 12th century by the Russian prince Izvor Tavorski. It is an active monastery.

The Rakovishki Monastery - the former centre of committees during Renaissance. The old church was preserved, where the 1850 conspirators decided on the rebellion in North-West Bulgaria³⁶.

1.4.4.1. Culture, Customs and Activities

The history of Vidin begins with the first millennium. The Mizi and Tribali Dacian tribes lived here, were conquered and integrated in the Roman Empire in the 1st century of our era. Many architectural fragments, sculptures, works cast in bronze and ceramic testify nowadays on the erection of the old Ratsiaria (Archar villag) Bononia (Vidin) during the Roman domination.

In the Middle Ages, Bononia continues its existence as Bdin. The historical destiny of Bdin in the Second Bulgarian Country is violent and unjust. In the 1290s, the Bdin area existed as an independent feudal principality led by the despot Sisman, elected as a Bulgarian king in 1323. As of 1371, Bdin became again the centre of an independent feudal principality led by the Kind Ivan Sratimir.

Between the 13th and 14th centuries, Bdin is not only a political centre, but also a major economic centre of North-West Bulgaria, with highly developed art and crafts, a large manufacturer of cereals and, more than that, the centre of a highly vivid literary activity.

The Bdin Bastion is the last one to fall under Turkish domination. The altruist and heroic fight of the Bulgarian people results in Vidin's release from under Ottoman domination in February 1878.

For two millennia, the area was a major military, cultural, transportation and commercial centre.

Cultural centres

The activity of cultural centres is deeply rooted in the Vidin region. Nowadays, the area includes a total of 76 cultural centres, where more than 150 people work.

³⁵ http://www.vidin.government.bg/094/60-16-16/sidebar/oblast_vidin/zabelejitelnosti.html

³⁶ The 2014-2020 Development Strategy of the Vidin district, pp. 106-110

The first Cultural Centre in the area was founded in 1870. This is the Tsviat Cultural Centre of Vidin, invariably and consequently associated to the development of culture and traditions, becoming a centre for the expression and preservation of the region's spiritual and cultural richness. More than 320 children and young people are involved in the cultural centre. The activities of Tsviat are as follows:

- The Tsviat Folkloric Group, winner of many national and international awards in Italy, Serbia, Turkey, Poland, Hungary, Macedonia, etc.;
- The school of children dancing;
- The Sturce Vocal Group for children;
- The Amadeus Ballet school for children - 1960;
- The Fame Jazz school - 1991;
- The foreign language school for children - 1940;
- The Rainbow Art school - 2001;
- The music school (classes for folkloric and classical instruments) - 1955.
- The mixed choir of Vidin.

Distribution of cultural centres by municipalities.

- Mun. Belogradchik – 6 cultural centres operate on the territory of the municipality.
- Mun. Boinitsa – 4 cultural centres are still operating on the territory of the municipality.
- Mun. Bregovo – A cultural centre is still operational in every settlement of Bregovo - 9 in total.
- Mun. Vidin- 20 cultural centres in total. 2 new cultural centres were opened in 2012.
- Mun. Gramada - only 2 cultural centres.
- Mun. Dimovo - 7 cultural centres.
- Mun. Kula - 5 operational cultural centres.
- Mun. Makresh- 4 cultural centres.
- Mun. Ruzhintsi – 6 cultural centres operate on the territory of the municipality.
- Mun. Chuprene - 5 cultural centres.

The cultural programme: the Vidin district is characterised by a rich cultural programme. Every year, the area hosts exhibitions of painting, sculpture, wood sculpture, regional and international festivals of folkloric singing and dancing and many others.

The International Folkloric Festival "Dansuri de-a lungul Dunarii" [Dancing along the Danube] first took place in 1997 in Vidin. It includes groups from various countries who present their national heritage and folkloric tradition.

The Genuine Folkloric Festival "Ritmurile Dunarii" [The Rhythms of the Danube] first took place in 1998. It includes groups of folk singing and dancing, folkloric traditions, story tellers from the cultural centres in the district. The purpose is to preserve, promote and transfer the folkloric heritage of Vidin from one generation to another.

The International Roma Singing and Dancing Festival "Pentru Pace" [For Peace]. It first took place in 2000. The festival is supported by Roma artists in the country and abroad.

The International Festival of Bulgarian-Romanian Folklore "Festivalul de cântece și dansuri valahice" [Festival of Wallachian Singing and Dancing] takes place every year.

Other folkloric festivals organised in the area are as follows:

- The Folkloric Art Festival "From Timok to Midzhur"
- The International Fair of Salash – Novo Korito;

- The Vidin Annual Fair;
- St. Demetrius - the Days of Vidin;
- The organisation of annual fairs in each municipality;
- International drawing workshop (plener) "Dunav art";
- Masterclas for directors
- Jules Pascin's birthday celebrations (in Vidin);
- Pentecost Sunday;
- The "Primavara Dunarii" [Danube Spring] Feasts - including national and local celebrations and anniversarie;
- The International Children's Day;
- Viennese Ball;
- Drawing up the annual cultural calendar of the Vidin district for the promotion of international, national, regional and local events in the field of culture³⁷.

The Vidin city is located in the centre of the district, hosting the most important cultural institutions.

- o The municipal theatre;
- o The cultural public theatre;
- o Simfonia-Vidin;
- o The art gallery;
- o The Mihalaki Georgiev Regional Library;
- o The Dunav Group for Popular Singing and Dancing;
- o The Tsviat Cultural centre;
- o The city's fanfare.

1.4.4.2. The Event Calendar

The calendar of cultural events in Vidin is closely related to Bulgarian traditions, customs and national and local celebrations (see annexes 1 and 2).

1.5 Types of tourism that are and can be undertaken in Mehedinti

The diversity and richness of the natural, ethnological and cultural heritage of Mehedinti provide favourable conditions to take up all forms of tourism, from relaxation and therapy to cave tourism and knowledge tourism³⁸.

Scientific tourism, a valid alternative for the development of tourism, resulted from the discovery of many geological or paleontological sites, of endemic or rare flora and fauna, of archaeological sites and popular architecture monuments that arose the interest and attracted researchers and specialists to the county. Thus, major interest can be seen for the Svnita paleontological site, classified as an area of an international scientific interest the Bahna paleontological site, classified as one of the most interesting and richest fossiliferous areas in the country, the Ponicoava Cave or the Topolnita Cave, declared a natural monument, the Cazanele Dunarii complex reservation, the flower reservation of Gura Vaii-Varciorova, the Karst Complex of Ponoaele with the Natural Bridge and the Lilac Forest that are unique in the country, the ethnographic sites of the Mehedinti Plateau, etc.

Cultural tourism is generated by the touristic sights belonging to cultural heritage and addresses an acquainted audience. Thus, visits can be performed to archaeological sights from the ancient times (the Dacian fortresses of Divici and the Liubcova Rock, the Roman Castrum and the leg of Apollodor's Bridge, the Roman thermae), from the Middle Ages (the ruins of the St. Ladislau, Drencova,

³⁷ The 2014-2020 Development Strategy of the Vidin district, pp. 106-110

³⁸ http://www.pnportiledefier.ro/forme_turism.html

Tricule, Gradet fortresses), as well as modern history (the Veterani Cave, the Portile de Fier Water Power and Navigation Complex), including significant monuments for the national identity of Romanians (Tabula Traiana, King Decebal's Statue).

Religious tourism appeared since the Middle Ages and developed strongly in the modern times. After 1989, as religious freedom was recovered, an increased interest was seen for religious spirituality, through visits to venues such as the St. Ann Monastery, the Vodita Monastery, the Catholic Cathedral of Orsova, the Mraconia Monastery, etc.

Relaxation tourism, aiming at psychological and physical recovery, is intensely undertaken since the natural setting of the county provides favourable conditions to this purpose. Moreover, it is the less costly, practically approaching all categories of tourists, irrespective of their hobbies, training, age, religion or financial means. Cazanele Mari and Cazanele Mici are the most spectacular and attractive landscape along the entire course of the Danube, and the Natural Bridge of Ponoarele is located in the Mehedinti Plateau.

Rural tourism is a type of tourism motivated by the wish to go back to nature, to traditional life and customs, and implies staying in a rural household (farm or agro-touristic pension house) or in a pension house. In order to be fit for agro-tourism, rural settlements should be located in an environment without pollutants, keeping ethnological, folkloric, cultural values and rural traditions, with a rich historical past, or other touristic resources allowing for the development of diverse and adapted offers. The Mehedinti Plateau is one of the areas in the country where such tourism can develop. Thus, many villages still maintain popular traditions, culture and celebrations (the ethnographical site of Balta, Prejna, Dalbocita, the Water Mill Complex in Ponoarele, etc.).

Green tourism is a type of tourism where a tourist's main focus is to observe and appreciate nature and local traditions related to nature. It can be undertaken by visiting areas that are relatively not affected by human activities, with a low environmental, social and cultural impact. Such areas can be found in the Mehedinti Plateau, where tourists can enjoy green products and may be accommodated in traditional homes; if they want to, they can participate in domestic activities (in Ponoarele, Isverna, Ilovita, Balotesti, Godeanu).

Birdwatching is a form of tourism dedicated to those who like to take photos and follow the behaviour of bird species while eating, nesting and flying. This type of tourism may be undertaken either from special locations, such as towers or bird watchers, or directly, in their characteristic habitats, with no special arrangement, in the wetlands on the Danube shore, declared natural areas for birds and fauna.

Forest tourism is another kind of tourism than the one we have grown used to. It is based on natural resources, that already exist and should only be capitalized. It is the form of tourism outlining the beauty of forest landscapes, with the well-known variety of structures, forms and colours. Forest tourism can be carried out safely under the guidance of field staff of the forest districts or agents of land from natural and national parks. Forest tourism is related to *hunting tourism* and *sports fishing*³⁹.

Speleological tourism is a form of tourism likely to capitalize the geological, cave-fauna, cave-landscape potential of the county. The most well-known and visited caves are: Topolnita, Isverna, Ponoarele, Ponicoava, Gaura cu Musca, the Water Cave in Valea Polevii, Zamonita, Veterani, each of them with its own legends and stories.

³⁹ http://www.pnportiledefier.ro/forme_turism.html

Cycling tourism, i.e. biking tourism is a more and more frequent form of active tourism, that may provide great benefits with minimum investment efforts, as an activity with a low environmental impact.

Mountain-biking is a form of sports tourism related to cycling tourism, but applied on special mountain routes, with properly equipped bikes. This type of sports tourism can be undertaken on various routes in the parks on the Danube shore.

Nautic tourism is one of the types of tourism with the highest impact, given the existence of the Portile de Fier I reservoir, which allows for the development of all types of sports and entertainment tourism.

Cruise tourism in the touristic areas of Portile de Fier and Cazanele Dunarii is indisputably connected to the Danube, and its potential is very high, since such touristic product is not sufficiently promoted. The *clisura* area has all the advantages for the promotion of this type of tourism, and the cruises organised by other European countries on the Danube may be a starting point to this purpose.

Spa tourism is one of the most constant types of touristic circulation, with a relatively stable customer basis. In the area, it is favoured by the relaxing environment of hills and the presence of water resources with mineral features that resulted in the development and location of a spa resort such as the one in Bala, with significant reserves of mineral water and therapeutic sludge, for internal and external cures. The balnear resort of Bala is recognized for its wells of sulphurous mineral, oligomineral (hypotonic), thermal water (23.5 - 29.5 Celsius degrees) and therapeutic sludge, indicated for the treatment of rheumatism, gynaecological disorders and locomotor impairments, as well as gastritis, colecysts, liver failure or kidney diseases. The spa complex in Bala is completed by other settlements (Balta, Negoiesti), whose mild climate recommends them for balnear purposes, but the absence of suitable infrastructure has prevented their proper use.

Shopping tourism is mostly undertaken in cross-border areas and renowned touristic areas, in small shops, renowned for their traditional products. Fig products (jam and brandy) can be found by tourists at the Fig Festival organised in Svinita. Cherry products are available in Ciresu of the Mehedinti Plateau.

All the above represent an invitation to take up the form of tourism that best fits everyone's personality; tourism is the most effective way to maintain a physical and mental tonus able to ensure the proper development of human activities⁴⁰.

1.6. Types of tourism that are and can be undertaken in Vidin

The following types of tourism are undertaken in Vidin: green tourism, hunting and fishing tourism⁴¹.

The Chuprene Biosphere Reserve has a surface of 1439 hectaes. It is included in the UNESCO list of the United Nations. The Vidin district hosts a range of protected areas, species and natural monuments. They include the renowned rock formations - Belogradchik, Borov Kamak, Chaturite and the Magua and Venetsa caves.

Hunting – the "Midzhur" hunting facility - located next to Belogradchik provides excellent conditions for the hunting of rare species, as an attractive destination for foreign tourists.

⁴⁰ http://www.pnportiledefier.ro/forme_turism.html

⁴¹ The 2014-2020 Vidin Development Strategy,

<http://www.raris.org/bazaznanja/download/bugarska/opstadokumenta/Regional%20development%20strategy%20of%20region%20Vidin%202014-2020.pdf>

The Rabisha Lake - the largest in North-Western Bulgaria, with a surface of 3250 ares. A camping is located 100 m from the South-East coast.

The Poletkovtsi village reservoir is suitable for the development of sports and hunting fishing and is one of the cleanest lakes in the region.

The Bozhuritsa entertainment area is located 18 km to the South-West of Vidin. The entertainment area has more than 600 places, companies, public organisations and private facilities. Conditions are perfect for short and long holidays within forest parks and water areas - swimming, boating and fishing. High opportunities for picnic and walks. Mushrooms, berries and herbs are found. The presence of large and small wild animals allows to undertake hunting. Access to the area is properly ensured.

The Belogradchik entertainment area - Covering the city with its unique natural phenomenon - the Belogradchik Rocks and the Belogradchik fortress. A world of fairy tale of people, animals, petrified forests and nature-carved fortresses dating millions of years back. The entertainment area is visited by many Bulgarian and foreign tourists, due to its unique beauty and the number of touristic sites. Conditions are perfect for hiking and educational tourism. The area has comfortable hotels, touristic cabins, suitable transport connections.

The Ratsiaria entertainment area is located 17 km to the South of Vidin, on the Danube. It is full of acacia, oak and ash trees and unveils a panoramic view of the river. The area has proper conditions for short rests close to water, fishing, hiking and educational tourism. The Ratsiaria archaeological site, dating back to the Ottoman domination, is nearby.

Water tourism. The Danube provides conditions for the development of water tourism. Every August, Vidin hosts the international regatta, whose 50th anniversary was marked in 2005.

The Falkovets river provides excellent conditions for rafting and extreme sports.

Cultural tourism develops in historical and cultural centres. The "Baba Vida" Castle of Vidin is a cultural monument of a national importance, one of the one hundred touristic sights of Bulgaria. A small museum is arranged within the fortress. "Kale" and the preserved gates are a cultural monument of a national importance.

Cave tourism. The Magura Cave on the Rabishka hill is of a rare beauty, with a variety of natural monuments in Bulgaria. The cave is connected to electricity. Its underground labyrinths are 2.5 km long, with spectacular "halls", stalactites and stalagmites, rare pictures, maintained very well, dating back to the 9th-8th centuries B.C. A range of unique rock paintings of pre-historical art are available as well. A special room is provided for tasting unique Magura wine.

Spa tourism. A well with strongly mineralised water, with a high content of iodine, bromine, etc. exists on the territory of Vidin, close to Slanotran. It is suitable for the manufacture of chemical products for pharmaceutical industry, geothermal energy and the use of such water for medical treatment. The water source has a flow of 5.00 l/s or 158 680 m³/year, at a water temperature of 41 °C.

Rural tourism. The area has a variety of natural resources and attractions for tourism development; however, rural tourism is highly underdeveloped.

1.7. Common natural and cultural tourism resources of Mehediñi - Vidin tourism destination

Table I.3 Common touristic sights of the Mehedinti - Vidin touristic area

Type of sight	Touristic sights in Mehedinti	Touristic sights in Vidin	Forms of tourism
I. NATURAL			

Protected areas	Portile de Fier Natural Park Mehedinti Plateau Geopark Natural Park Domogled - Valea Cernei National Park Hinova - Ostrovul Corbului and Garla Mare-Salcia included in the Blahnita Natura 2000 site Starmina Forest, Lunca Vanjului Forest and Bunget Forest	Vraska Ciuca Chuprenski buchi The Kutovo Island 2 special protection areas for birds and fauna (SPA)	scientific green tourism
Natura 2000 sites	Blahnita, the Jiu Corridor, the Danube course - Bazias - Portile de Fier, Domogled - Valea Cernei, the Almajului-Locvei Mountains, the Starmina Forest, the Mehedinti Plateau, Portile de Fier	"The West Balkans and the Pre-Balkans" "The West Balkans" 19 Natura 2000 sites, 17 sites of a community importance (SCI)	scientific green tourism
reservations	Cazanele Mari and Cazanele Mici, the Svinita fossiliferous place, the Bahna fossiliferous place, the Duhovna hill, Gura Vaih - Varciorova Fata Virului, Cracul Crucii, the Varanic hill, the Oglanicului hill, Cracul Gaiora Cornetul Baii and Valea Manastirii, Cornetul Băltii, the Cosustei breakwater, Cornetul Babelor, the Borovat and Cerboanei Forest, the Epuran Cave, the Topolnita Cave, the Topolnitei breakwater, the Forest on the Draghiceanu mountain, the Mediterranean shrubs of Izverna, Cornetul Piatra Incalecata, the kast well and the rocks of Camana, the lilac forest of Ponoarele, the karst complex of Ponoarele - Zaton lake, the limestone pavements	The Chuprene Biosphere Reserve The rocks of Belogradchik Rabisha Lake The Magura Cave The Borov Chamac natural monument – waterfall The Levi I Desni Suhi peci natural monument - cave The Venetsa natural monument - cave The waterfall of the Stakevska river in Byalata voda natural monument The Petkov Tserak natural monument – waterfall	scientific green tourism

	and the Natural Bridge of Ponoarele (God's Bridge, cave of the Bridge)		
other natural attractions	The Danube river Beaches on the Danube Gorges	The Danube river Novo Selo beach Koshava beach Golia island beach	recreation
II. ANTHROPIC			
cultural	The medieval Fortress of Severin The Roman Castrum in Drobeta Trajan's Bridge in Drobeta The thermae of Drobeta The ruins of the Severin Metropolis (14 th century) The Museum of the Portile de Fier Region The Art Museum The Th. Costescu Cultural Palace The Radu Negru Hall The Traian National College The Water tower The Tri Kule Fortress Decebal's Statue The Gaura Chindiei II Cave. The Veterani Cave The Museum of the Portile de Fier I Power Plant The Gradetului Fortress houses with traditional architecture The Ada-Kaleh Citadel relocated to the Simian Island The Castrum of Hinova	The Baba Vida Fortress Museum of Baba Vida Fortress Museum of Kastra Martis - Kula Koluka Turkish Mansion Museum The cross-shaped barracks Museum The Kaleto defence walls The Kaleto-Belogradchik Roman fortress The Kastra Martis – Kula Roman fortress The Koluka Turkish Mansion Osman Pazvantoglu's Library The Synagogue The Old Turkish Post Office The Municipal theatre of Vidin The cultural public theatre; Simfonia-Vidin; The art gallery; The Mihalaki Georgiev Regional Library; The Tsviat Cultural centre; The city's fanfare.	scientific green tourism cultural cave rural cruise
artistic monuments	The Water Castle The Monument for the Heroes in the 1 st World War Decebal's Statue Trajan's Statue The Circular Walk of Personalities The Tudor Vladimirescu monument	The mausoleum of Antim I	green tourism cultural

religious venues	<p>the Grecescu Church, the Maioreasa Church, the Roman-Catholic Cathedral, the New Church, the Synagogue. The Vodita Monastery The St. Ann Monastery The Strehaia Monastery The Mraconia Monastery The Roman-Catholical Cathedral of Orsova Topolnita hermitage The wooden church devoted to the St. Apostles The wooden church devoted to St. Nicholas The wooden church devoted to the St. Voivodes The wooden church devoted to St. Stephen The wooden church devoted to the Dormition of Mary</p>	<p>The St. Pantelimon Church The St. Petka Church The Sf. V. M. Dimitar Cathedral The Dobridolski Monastery The rock monastery of Albutin The Izvorski Monastery The Rakovishki Monastery The Novo Selo church</p>	<p>green tourism cultural religious</p>
architectural monuments	<p>The Holy Trinity Church, the St. Nicholas and St. Spiridon Church, the St. John the Baptist Church, the Church of the Dormition of Mary, Nistor's Cula, the Tudor Vladimirescu Cula. The Church of the St. Apostles Peter and Paul (Erghevita); the Church of the Ascension (Bistrita); the St. George Church (Hinova); the St. George Church (Dunărea Mică); the Church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit (Garla Mare); <i>the St. Catherine and St. Calinic Church</i> (Salcia).</p>	<p>Osman Pazvantoglu's Mosque The cross-shaped barracks</p>	<p>cultural religious</p>
parks	<p>The Rozelor Park, The General Dragalina Garden (with the Severin Fortress), the park of the Drobeta archaeological complex The central park (in</p>	<p>Danube Park</p>	<p>entertainment and rest</p>

	English style) with monuments, the artesian fountain		
Cultural events			cultural entertainment
- balls	the Martisor Ball, the Turks' Ball, the Izmenelor Ball, the Village's Sons		
- festivals	The Fig Festival, the Festival of Danube Villages, the Sports Festival, the Musical Festival of Minorities, the Minorities' Festival, the "Ponoare, Ponoare" Festival, the Plaiului Closani Festival; the folkloric festival "Munte, munte, brad frumos"; the folk music festival-competition "Constantin Gherghina"; the "Oale si sarmale" festival of ceramics from Oltenia; the Vine and Wine Festival;	The International Folkloric Festival "Dansuri de-a lungul Dunarii" [Dancing along the Danube] The Genuine Folkloric Festival "Ritmurile Dunarii" [The rhythms of the Danube] The International Roma Singing and Dancing Festival "Pentru Pace" [For Peace] The international Bulgarian-Romanian folklore festival The Festival of Wallachian Singing and Dancing The Folkloric Art Festival "From Timok to Midzhur"	
- celebrations			
- competitions	The traditional lilac celebration; The acacia celebration; The celebration of the Topolnita Cave; The days of towns: The Days of Severin, Severin autumn	Jules Pascin's birthday celebrations (in Vidin); Pentecost Sunday The "Danube Spring" celebrations The International Children's Day; Viennese Ball;	
- <i>nedeia</i>			
- fairs	Competition of puppet theatre for children <i>Nedeia</i> , with different dates for every community and related to a church's saint, etc.		
Folk groups,	The Danubius folk group	The Tsviat folk group,	cultural
		The International Fair of Salash – Novo Korito	

dancing and music schools	(Drobeta Turnu Severin) The "Liliac de la Ponoare" folk group (Ponoarele) The Dunav folk group (Svinita) The Liliacul folk group (Baia de Arama)	The school of children dancing; The Sturce Vocal Group for children; The Fame Jazz school The Rainbow Art school - 2001; The music school The mixed choir of Vidin.	entertainment
Cultural centres		76 cultural centres in the Vidin region	

Conclusions of the chapter

Through its "strategic" position, the Mehedinti county, located at the meeting between the Carpathians and the Balkans, with direct access to major European roads, railway lines and navigation lines, with an enviable geographical landscape, crossed by the Danube in its Romanian course, provides an outstanding potential for touristic development.

For a most effective use of the rich touristic heritage of this unique area in our country, by diversifying natural and cultural resources, the development of tourism should observe the principles of sustainable development, considering the harmonisation of touristic activities in the context of regional and local economic development, combined with the requirements of environment protection laws. Three sustainable possibilities can be envisaged by our country: ecological tourism, sustainable tourism and green tourism. The factors influencing the development of ecological tourism are: the natural potential, the rural population, rich traditions and the attractive geographical location.

The Mehedinti county holds an impressive natural and cultural heritage, concentrated in natural protected areas, close to Drobeta Turnu Severin, where tourist information centres are also available for other sights in Mehedinti.

The Portile de Fier Natural Park is a protected natural area with abundant resources that may be seen as sights, through its geological complexity, the diversity of its flora and fauna, sub-Mediterranean climate conditions, completed by a rich ethnic, cultural, religious and historical heritage.

The temperate continental climate, with sub-Mediterranean influences, as well as the very varied land types in the Mehedinti Plateau Geopark created conditions for many species of rare plants and animals. This natural park is rich in cultural and historical sights, and folkloric traditions and crafts are still undertaken in our days.

The south-east part of the Mehedinți county has been inhabited from the oldest times, with archaeological and palentological evidence preserving "testimonies of the past", bird and fauna protected natural areas and traditional architecture monuments.

The natural and cultural heritage of Mehedinti provides the possibility to develop all main forms of tourism: scientific, cultural, religious, itinerary-based, green tourism, etc. Following the touristic routes in the natural parks of Mehedinti, protected area and Natura 2000 sites, a tourist can find natural and cultural sights, some of them even unique in Europe.

The Vidin district hosts three of the most important national touristic sights of Bulgaria (out of 100 national sights). The natural touristic resources of the Vidin region are diverse and rich. There is a part of the Chuprene Biosphere Reserve, several protected areas, 19 Natura 2000 sites, 17 sites of community importance (SCI) and 2 special protection areas for birds and fauna (SPA).

The Vidin district is characterised by an outstanding historical heritage. The district includes 56 cultural monuments (archaeological items from the antiquity to the Middle Ages, churches, mosques and monasteries of the 14th-19th centuries, buildings from 1880 to 1925).

The Vidin region has a high potential for the development of several types of tourism. Even though the district has an attractive potential, tourism is not very developed. The main forms of tourism are cultural-historical, scientific, ecumenic, itinerant tourism. The development of entertainment tourism is envisaged with the opening of the Vidin-Calafat bridge.

Natural, cultural and historical resources, as well as the lakes, forests, caves, outstanding landscapes provided by the Danube and the moderate climate provide proper conditions for the development of adventure tourism. Cultural-historical tourism can develop in urban centres, while agro-tourism, thematic tourism (local traditions, gastronomy, etc.) and green tourism can develop in rural areas.

Cultural institutions located in the region do not provide enough attractions and entertainment programmes. The lack of funds is an obstacle for Cultural centres to take part in national and international events. For most small towns, Cultural centres are a major source of cultural events and preservation of local traditions.

II. THE ANALYSIS OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE MEHEDINTI AND VIDIN TOURISTIC AREAS

II.1 The analysis of macro marketing. PEST analysis

This analysis includes external forces acting on the macro-environment and micro-environment boosting or hindering the tourism activity in the area. These factors permanently exert less or higher influence on the tourist destination, being in constant change. The macroenvironment elements, which are PEST subject analysis, include: political and legal environment, economic, social and cultural environment, the technological, demographic environment, natural environment. In addition to these elements, one can study the demographic factors (age structure of the population, ethnicity, level of mobility, the total population, etc.) and natural and ecological factors.

II.1.1. The political and legislative environment

The political environment is formed by social structures, political forces that act and by the relationships established between them. All these create a stable or less stable political climate with direct influence on the business environment of a region, as well as the degree of state intervention in the economy and the general attitude of the administration towards economic life of society.

The regulatory environment encompasses all the legal rules and legislation, regulating activities of doing business and directly affects tourism activity. Legal and institutional environment includes not only domestic trade legislation, but also the rules established by international authorities.

In terms of tourism activity, it is regulated by normative acts of law given the special nature of tourism activities, an area of special importance in terms of developing the country's economy.

Mehedinti County

The normative acts regulating tourism activities in Romania are:

- Government Ordinance no. 58/1998 on the organization of tourism activity in Romania;
- Law no. 755/2001 approving Government Ordinance no. 58/1998 on the organization of tourism activity in Romania;
- Government Ordinance no. 5/2003 for the amendment of Art. 33 of Government Ordinance no. 58/1998 on the organization of tourism activity in Romania.
- Law no. 229/2003 approving Government Ordinance no. 5/2003 for the amendment of Art. 33 of Government Ordinance no. 58/1998 on the organization of tourism activity in Romania
- Government Decision no. 238/2001 on the conditions of license and patent Desk
- Minister of Tourism Order no. 170/2001 approving the Methodological Norms on the criteria and methodology for licensing and patents for tourism
- Minister of Tourism Order no. 691/2002 for the amendment and Full-Methodological Norms on the criteria and methodology for licensing and patents for tourism, approved by Ministry of Tourism no. 170/2001
- Minister of Tourism Order no. 910/2002 amending Regulations arrangements regarding the criteria and methodology for licensing and Travel patents, approved by Ministry of Tourism no. 170/2001
- H. G. 1328/2001 on classification of tourist accommodation units
- H. G. 1412/2002 amending and supplementing H. G. no. 1.328 / 2001 concerning the classification of tourist accommodation units

- Minister of Tourism Order no. 510/2002 approving the Methodological Norms concerning the classification of tourist accommodation units
- Minister of Tourism Order no. 911/2002 on amending Order No. tourism minister. 510/2002 approving the Methodological Norms concerning the classification of tourist accommodation units
- Minister of Tourism Order no. 188/2003 amending and supplementing the Methodological Norms on classification of tourist accommodation units
- Government Decision no. 305/2001 regarding the certification and use of tourist guides
- Government Decision no. 631/2003 amending and supplementing Government Decision no. 305/2001 regarding the certification and use of tourist guides
- Order of the Minister of Transport, Construction and Tourism no. 637/2004 approving the Methodological Norms concerning the conditions and criteria for selection, enrollment, certification and use of tourist guides
- Government Decision no. 511/2001 on some measures for the organization of leisure resorts
- Government Decision no. 452/2003 regarding the conduct of recreational boating
- Order of the Minister of Transport, Construction and Tourism no. 292/2003 approving the Methodological Norms regarding the conduct of recreational boating
- Government Emergency Ordinance no. 152/2002 on the organization and functioning of companies and thermal tourism recovery
- Law no. 143/2003 approving Government Emergency Ordinance no. 152/2002 on the organization and operation of tourism companies spa and recovery
- Government Decision no. 77/2003 on the establishment of measures to prevent accidents in the mountains and organizing the rescue in mountains
- Government Decision no. 559/2001 on certain measures for the marketing of food and non-food in tourist resorts
- Government Decision m. 237/2001 approving the Regulation on access, records and protection of tourists in tourism accommodation
- Government Decision no. 306/2001 regarding the practice of economic agents to tourism and the cultural institutions of non-discriminatory tariffs and rates for Romanian and foreign tourists and visitors
- Government Decision no. 805/2001 on some measures to inform the maximal tariffs for housing services in tourist reception with functions of tourist accommodation in unorganized tourism
- Government Decision no. 1.185 / 2001 regarding the increase of fines stipulated limits in some normative acts in the field of tourism
- Order of the Minister of Tourism, Minister of Health and Family Minister of Public Administration and the Minister of Water and Environmental Protection no. 330/262/109/327/2002 on Pest and vermin control structures tourism accommodation in seaside resorts
- Government Ordinance no. 107/1999 on the marketing of travel packages
- Law no. 631/2001 approving Government Ordinance no. 107/1999 on the marketing of travel packages
- Order of the Minister of Transport, Construction and Tourism no. 516/2005 approving the framework contract for the marketing of travel packages
- Minister of Tourism Order no. 235/2001 on insurance in case of insolvency or bankruptcy of tourists travel agency
- Government Decision no. 867/2006 approving the norms and criteria for certification of tourist resorts

Vidin district

The normative acts regulating tourism activities in Bulgaria are:

- Tourism Law, in force since October 1 2002 Prom. SG 56 2002; The law was adopted by the 39th National Assembly on May 23, 2002.
- Ministry of Tourism Rules approved by State Decree no. 447 of 23/12/2014, updated in Official Gazette no. 108 dated 30.12.2014, effective from 01.01.2015
- Ordinance granting operating licenses for travel agents and tour operators, approved by Government Decree no. 223 of 27.09.2002
- Ordinance no. 1 of 5 January 2016 for education, practical training and vocational qualifications required for entitlement to pursue the profession of tourist guide.
- Ordinance on classification of accommodation, means of shelter and locations for catering and entertainment, in force from 07.01.2005 approved by Government Decree no.357 of 27.12.2004.
- Charge fees that are collected according to tourism law in force since 01.10.2002, approved by Government Decree no. 220 of 25.09.2002, updated in the Official Gazette No. 93 dated 1 October 2002, amended the Official Gazette no. 9 of 25 January 2005 and amended in Official Gazette no. 29 5 April 2005 and amended in Official Gazette no. 98 of 27.11.2007.
- Decree no. 217 of 17 August 2015 Ordinance on the requirements for acceptance of accommodation, catering and entertainment locations and order to determine the category refusal, demotion, suspension and stopping the activity category.
- Ordinance regarding the unique tourist information system, approved by Government Decree no. 23 of 02/09/2015.
- Ordinance no. 3 of March 7, 2016 on education, practical training and qualifications required for entitlement to pursue the profession of Mountain Guide.
- Ordinance No. 2 of January 29, 2016 regarding the conditions and regulations for certification balneotreatment centers (medical SPA) SPA centers, wellness centers and thalasso-therapy in the Official Gazette No. 11 of February 9, 2016.
- Law on service published in Official Gazette No. 15 of 23.02.2010, effective from 23.02.2010, amended in No. 83 of 09.24.2013.
- Consumer Protection Law in force since 03.26.2013.
- Law on Access to Public Information in effect from 13.07.2007, as amended in the Official Gazette no. 104 of 05.12.2008, as amended in no. 77 of 01.10.2010, no. 39 of 20.05.2011
- Ordinance no. 22 of October 26, 2015 on single standard and organization of work in tourist information centers and national network of tourist centers in force since 04.05.2016
- Ordinance on the terms and conditions of compulsory insurance "liability tour operator" approved by Government Decree no. 306 of 21/12/2013, updated in Official Gazette no. 2 of 02/01/2014.
- Ordinance no. 16-1399 of 11.10.2013 on the requirements for localization, adaptation space activity tour operator and / or travel agent activity and education, language skills and experience of staff who will be involved in the implementation of tourism activity. Issued by Economy and Energy Minister updated the official Gazette No. 97 of 08.11.2013.
- Ordinance no. 261 of 13.07.2006 on common rules on compensation and assistance to passengers in the event of refusal of an air carrier to allow them to board the aircraft and when the flight cancellation or delay. Issued by the Minister of Transport, updated in Official Gazette No. 62 of 01.08.2006.

II.1.2. The economic environment

It includes all the economy factors that influence the ability of the tourist destination to compete in tourism, but also the ability and willingness of consumers to buy various goods and services. Among the factors influencing the purchasing power include inflation, price developments, consumption patterns of the population, etc. Other analysis factors of the state and the economic trend of the tourist area, used are: structuring the economy by sectors, the existing accommodation facilities, tourist visits, average length of stay, seasonality of tourism. These aspects of the economic situation of the area is reflected directly or indirectly, to determine the volume and structure of supply of services, the revenues from the tourist area, size of demand, level of competition and price movement.

Inflation rate

The inflation rate has a significant impact on marketing efforts to promote tourism area because a high rate means an economy in difficulty and therefore a low marketing potential. Also, when nominal incomes exceed inflation, there is an increase in real incomes and consumers can purchase greater quantities of goods and tourism services.

Table II.1. The inflation rate in Romania during 2010-2015

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Inflation (%)	6,1	5,8	3,3	4,0	1,1	-0,6

Source: INSSE, (<http://www.insse.ro/cms/ro/content/ipc-serii-de-date>)

Table II.2. The inflation rate in Bulgaria in the period 2010-2015

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Inflation (%)	2,4	4,2	3,0	0,9	-1,4	-0,1

Source: Republic of Bulgaria - National Statistics Institute, (<http://www.nsi.bg/en/content/6063/annual-average-cpi-previous-year-100>)

The evolution of inflation rate is volatile, with a downward trend. In the economic environment, it is desirable to stabilize inflation because its instability generate variations in rates of tourism services (accommodation, auxiliary) and prices of tourism products offered and these frequent changes in the level of charges tourism products can have a negative effect on tourism demand and default on tourism activities in the area.

However, the downward trend of this economic indicator has positive effects on people's purchasing power could generate increased demand for tourism services and products.

The consumption patterns of the population

To highlight the trend of consumption of the population, it has been used the consumer price index (CPI) which measures the evolution of prices of bought goods and tariffs for services used by the population in a given period (current period), compared to a previous period (the base or reference), being excluded from the calculation: consumption from own resources, expenditures for investment and accumulation, interest paid on loans, insurance rates, fines, taxes, etc., and expenditures paid for agricultural production individual households.

Mehedinti County

It can be seen from Table II.3 that the consumer trend of population both food goods and tourism services have a comparable importance, and the trend of

consumption is influenced by seasonal tourism (during winter holidays, the consumption of touristic goods and services increases).

Table II.3. Consumer price indices by main goods and services

Categories of goods and services purchased	Monday					
	January 2001 (%)	August 2015 (%)	November 2015 (%)	December 2015 (%)	January 2016 (%)	February 2016 (%)
Total food goods	103,8	99,21	100,06	100,24	100,47	100,34
Total non-food	102,2	99,46	100,5	99,89	98,44	99,73
Total services	107	100,02	100,31	100,4	98,88	98,86
Payment choice of hotel establishments	102,1	99,94	100,07	100,17	100,13	100,09

Source: National Institute of Statistics - Consumer price indices by main goods and services

Regarding the trend of consumption of tourism services (Table II.4), it has also suffered changes over time due to changes in economic circumstances (economic crisis) and changes of the population's cultural values (the traditional accommodation structure -hotel- gives way for less conventional, cheaper and more environmentally responsible structures, for short and medium holidays).

Table II.4. Indices commercial services to the population on tourism activities

Activities of national economy (groups)	Years			
	Year 2009 (%)	Year 2010 (%)	Year 2011 (%)	Year 2012 (%)
Hotels and other similar accommodation facilities	80,7	101	112	93
Accommodation facilities for holidays and other short-term periods	45,1	84,3	129	106,5
Caravan parks, camping and camps	75,1	155,9	97,8	47
Other accommodation	198,5	112,9	109,8	161,6
Restaurants	95,4	95	104,3	111,4
Nutrition activities (catering) for events and other food services	64,5	116,2	95,6	96
Travel agency and tour operator activities	74,1	102,7	111,9	115,4
Other reservation service and related activities	143,3	72,2	183	118,2

Source: National Statistics Institute - Indices of commercial services for population activities

Vidin district

According to data from Table II.5, the trend is moving household consumer preference for products and tourism services, more than half (approx. 70%) of the consumed products are touristic, within them the most desired are food and accommodation, but the evolution of consumption is oscillating on the analysed period.

Table II.5. Domestic consumption after tourism products and types of tourism (million Leva)

Products	Year 2010			Year 2011		
	Visitors Consumer spending (cash)		Total consumption Domestic tourism	Visitors Consumer spending (cash)		Total domestic tourism consumption
	Consumption of inbound tourism	Consumption of domestic tourism		Consumption of inbound tourism	Consumption of domestic tourism	
Total products Consumption	5838,30	776,34	6614,64	6058,10	1015,65	7073,75
Tourism products consumption	3945,32	703,65	4648,97	4148,69	901,45	5050,14
Accommodation	1182,86	187,97	1370,84	1260,83	211,53	1472,36
Drinks and food	1550,07	166,25	1716,32	1627,47	275,73	1903,20
Travelers transport	675,64	264,77	940,41	707,11	318,67	1025,78
Tourism agencies and other accommodation services	0,00	10,34	10,34	0,00	13,87	13,87
Cultural services	479,57	63,84	543,41	490,68	67,08	557,76
Sports și recreation	57,17	10,48	67,65	62,60	14,57	77,17
Other products consumption	1892,98	72,69	1965,67	1909,41	114,20	2023,61
Tourism consumption share in total consumption (%)	67,58	90,64	70,28	68,48	88,76	71,39

(million Leva)

Products	Year 2012			Year 2013		
	Visitors Consumer spending (cash)		Total consumption Domestic tourism	Visitors Consumer spending (cash)		Total domestic tourism consumption
	Consumption of inbound tourism	Consumption of domestic tourism		Consumption of inbound tourism	Consumption of domestic tourism	
Total products Consumption	6248,00	1044,50	7292,50	6578,55	1144,20	7722,76
Tourism products consumption	4278,74	951,03	5229,77	4524,75	1008,68	5533,43
Accommodation	1300,36	238,24	1538,60	1345,01	250,75	1595,76
Drinks and food	1678,48	324,26	2002,74	1931,30	322,27	2253,57

Travelers transport	729,27	282,90	1012,17	627,67	306,85	934,52
Tourism agencies and other acc services	0,00	14,34	14,34	0,00	15,12	15,12
Cultural services	506,06	76,80	582,86	544,90	97,27	642,17
Sports și recreation	64,56	14,49	79,06	75,87	16,42	92,29
Other products consumption	1969,26	93,46	2062,73	2053,80	135,52	2189,33
Tourism consumption share in total consumption (%)	68,48	91,05	71,71	68,78	88,16	71,65

Source: Republic of Bulgaria - National Statistical Institute, *Tourism Satellite Accounts*

Economic structure by sector

Mehedinti County

In the year 2014 the largest number of active economic agents in Mehedinti (1360 units) are in the "trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles" sector. The following sectors with a large number of active entities are: "Transport and storage" (490 businesses), "Manufacturing" (302 units).

The tourism sector, included in the "Hotels and restaurants" segment has a number of 199 active economic units, representing 5.76% of all enterprises active in the county. Within this segment, 87.44% are small economic units (with a maximum of 9 employees). From the 199 active business units of the sector, only a number of 45 units⁴² operates tourist accommodation, representing 1.30% from the total active economic agents, percentage reflecting less competition for tourist accommodation businesses.

Table II.6. Local units active in the national economy sectors in 2014

County Activities (NACE sections, Rev. 2)	Total	of which: by size class, by number of employees			
		0-9	10-49	50-249	250 și peste
MEHEDINȚI	3457	3022	369	52	14
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles , motorcycles	1360	1223	129	8	-
Transport and storage	490	456	28	5	1
Manufacturing	302	217	61	18	6
Constructions	270	221	44	3	2
Professional, scientific and technical activities	228	219	9	-	-
Hotels and restaurants	199	174	23	2	-
Agriculture forestry and fishing	129	109	18	2	-

⁴² National Statistics Institute – *Tourism accommodation units at 31 iulie 2014*

Activities of administrative services and support services	99	72	19	7	1
Financial and insurance	74	73	1	-	-
Information and communications	65	59	5	1	-
Other service activities	63	60	2	1	-
Health and welfare ¹⁾	46	40	6	-	-
Water supply; sewerage, waste management remediation activities	36	24	8	3	1
Real estate transactions	32	28	4	-	-
Education ¹⁾	20	17	3	-	-
Arts, entertainment and recreation	19	12	6	1	-
Mining and quarrying	15	14	-	-	1
Production and supply of electricity and gas, steam and air condition	10	4	3	1	2

Source: National Statistics Institute - Local units active on national economic activity at NACE section level Rev. 2, size classes by number of employees, 2014

Vidin district

Economic sectors, in 2007-2011, the highest number of active operators in the district of Vidin (1513 or 47.53% of total) are in the "trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles" because this sector is leading all municipalities. The following sectors with a large number of active entities are: "Activities lodging and restaurants" 261 operators (8.20%), 'Production' 223 units (7.01%), "Agriculture, forestry and fishing" 183 units (5.75%) and "Health and welfare": 176 units (5.53%). The lowest number of goals are "Education", "Culture, sports and entertainment" and "extractive industry" sectors.

This trend is due to the fact that these activities may be carried out as a family business in various forms of self-employment⁴³.

Table II.7. Businesses in Vidin district 31.12.2011

	Enterprise (number)	Enterprise (%)
Total district Vidin	3.183	100 %
Trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	1.513	47,53
Accommodation and restaurant activities	261	8,20
output	223	7,01
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	183	5,75
Health and social care	176	5,53
Transport, storage, post	159	5,00
Professional and scientific research	159	5,00
Real estate transactions	127	3,99
Other activities	110	3,46

⁴³ Administration of Vidin District, *Strategy for district development 2014-2020*, pp. 27-30

construction	91	2,86
Creation and dissemination of information, art products, telecommunications	39	1,67
Administrative and support service activities	35	1,23
Production and processing of electricity, heat and gas	25	0,79
Education	24	0,75
Culture, sports, entertainment	24	0,75
Extractive industry	8	0,25
Water distribution, sewerage, waste management and recycling	8	0,25

Source: Vidin District Administration, District Development Strategy 2014-2020, pg.30

Fiscality

Tourism market, both in Romania and Bulgaria, it is affected by high taxation and the existence of illegal activity or maintained at the limit of legality - particularly in terms of tourist accommodation, especially in rural areas (where registered economic agents are less than those who actually offer accommodation or have addresses displayed on the web).

To improve the situation, were adopted more facilities aimed at developing the tourism sector (eg in Romania, *Government Ordinance no. 63/1997 on the establishment of facilities for rural tourism development* has contributed to the development of agritourism because it grants exemption from payment of income tax for a period of 10 years for boarding houses and rural tourism units with a capacity of up to 10 rooms; payment at the rate established for the consumption of household electricity, gas and telecommunications services use of agro tourist boarding houses and hostels with a capacity of up to 5 rooms)⁴⁴.

Range of tourism services

The tourism infrastructure (technical and material) comprises:

- Capacity accommodation and catering;
- Network of services related to tourism;
- Means leisure and treatment;
- Means of communication;
- Technical infrastructure (networks of electricity, heat, water, sewage);
- Postal services, banking, healthcare etc⁴⁵.

It depends on the quality of tourism infrastructure:

- The valuation (low / high) to fund tourism;
- Degree of satisfaction (complete / incomplete) of tourism demand for the variety tourism services;
- Providing a tourism consumption (lower / higher)⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ Study 7. activities and tourism infrastructure (2014), part of the Territorial Strategy of Romania, beneficiary Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, p. 44-45
http://sdtr.ro/upload/STUDII/7.%20Raport_Activitatile%20si%20infrastructura%20turistica_.pdf

⁴⁵ Cocean, P, *Geografia turismului*, Editura Focul viu, 2004, p. 15.

Tourism market in Mehedinti area - Vidin is vulnerable in terms of supply of goods and tourism services because they do not meet quality and the diversity demand for holidays and business trips (most travel agencies have an activity restricted to ticket sales treatment or hospitality packages abroad, lacking travel packages to exploit the local tourism potential).

Whole links distribution channel through which tourism products are put to the ultimate consumer include travel agencies, regional tourism offices / tourist information centers, central reservations, the Internet, or even the accommodation itself. Of these, the most commonly used are travel agents and accommodation themselves. Although the Internet is primarily a source of information on tourism product, unfortunately reservations online on the Romanian bank of the Danube (considering only those involving the payment online booking) do not exceed 3-5% of the total reservations⁴⁷. Regarding the situation in Bulgaria, selling products online travel accommodations, rental cars and other means of transport to residents remains quite low as most operators in tourism either do not have implemented booking systems online, or national tourists prefer to make the reservation by phone or in person on the spot⁴⁸.

Another shortcoming of the offered services is the guiding tourists services by specialized personnel. Although the area is appreciated for the variety and uniqueness of the tourism attractions, the number of specialized guides is reduced. Tourism personnel, especially in rural areas has little information on the management of the accommodation, namely the creation of new tourism products, most hostels offering only basic services (accommodation only, and in some cases the meal is also included)⁴⁹.

Travel agencies that were active at the end of 2012 in the county of Mehedinti area they numbered 12 and at the level of April 2016, they numbered 18. The analysis of territorial distribution of travel agencies, shows that their location in the geographic space is extremely Romanian polarized and unbalanced: of the 18 active agents, 16 were located in the county capital (see Appendix 4), concentrating only about 0.4% of the total number of travel agencies operating in Romania, the explication is that the population is predominantly elderly, rural and low income⁵⁰.

Regarding the role of travel agencies in the development of tourism in the region can be attributed to the general lack of innovation in the creation of domestic tourist products and specialization in meeting the segment "outgoing" because of higher profitability⁵¹.

Tourist traffic

In order to relieve the optimal level of tourist demand for Vidin - Mehedinti tourist area - , tourism activity recorded is analyzed during 2010-2015.

⁴⁶ Mazilu Mirela, *Geografia turismului (Tourism Geography)*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 2007, p.118

⁴⁷ ADR Oltenia - Studiu privind dezvoltarea turismului la nivel regional, p. 177, <http://www.adroltenia.ro/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/STUDIUL-TURISM-FINAL.pdf>

⁴⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Sector: Tourism, September 2014, pg.7, <https://www.google.ro/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKewitgf->

[goc3MAhUMFSwKHRc3AogQFggaMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fbulgarien.um.dk%2Fda%2F~%2Fmedia%2FBulgarien%2FDocuments%2FTourism_2014.pdf&usg=AFQjCNH4i-xMu-XZX34dago-A8fkzaaxhw&sig2=t1qVRFh_VN_pnz5nDqCr1A&bvm=bv.121421273,d.bGg](http://www.adroltenia.ro/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/STUDIUL-TURISM-FINAL.pdf)

⁴⁹ ADR Oltenia - Studiu privind dezvoltarea turismului la nivel regional, p. 177, <http://www.adroltenia.ro/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/STUDIUL-TURISM-FINAL.pdf>

⁵⁰ Studiul 7. Activitățile și infrastructura turistică (2014) beneficiar Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Administrației Publice, p. 19

⁵¹ Idem, p. 185

Tourist Movements expresses different aspects and actual demand should be analyzed through the prism of the indicators: *arrivals* and *overnight stays* by tourists in accommodation. These will be presented at the study area for accommodation and their evolution will be analyzed for the period 2010 - 2015.

✓ *Arrivals / overnight stays* in accommodation units

Table II.8. Evolution of the number of tourists and the number of overnight stays in tourist accommodation units for Mehedinți county and district Vidin

		Year 2010	Year 2011	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014	Year 2015
ARRIVALS							
MEHEDIŢI	Total Country	6.072.757	7.031.606	7.686.489	7.943.153	8.465.909	9.930.496
	Mehedinți	54.942	54.778	53.684	52.323	51.818	81.003
	% Mehedinți in Total country	0,90%	0,78%	0,70%	0,66%	0,61%	0,82%
VIDIN	Total Country	4.411.899	5.045.332	5.494.014	5.847.289	5.945.908	6.279.036
	Vidin	27.025	33.515	30.978	35.212	31.317	30.810
	% Vidin in Total country	0,61%	0,66%	0,56%	0,60%	0,53%	0,49%
OVERNIGHT STAYS							
MEHEDIŢI	Total Country	16.051.135	17.979.439	19.166.122	19.362.671	20.280.041	23.519.340
	Mehedinți	135.869	137.129	119.972	117.103	112.185	165.641
	% Mehedinți in Total Country	0,85%	0,76%	0,63%	0,60%	0,55%	0,70%
VIDIN	Total Country	16.261.170	18.855.331	20.252.038	21.617.474	21.698.391	21.397.816
	Vidin	44.344	54.659	52.249	58.229	46.478	46.451
	% Vidin in Total country	0,27%	0,29%	0,26%	0,27%	0,21%	0,22%

Source: NSI, *Attendance of tourist accommodation units in 2010-2015* and NSI of the Republic of Bulgaria, *The tourism accommodation units on areas, regions and districts*, updated 02/24/2016, <http://www.nsi.bg/en/content/7067/annual-date>

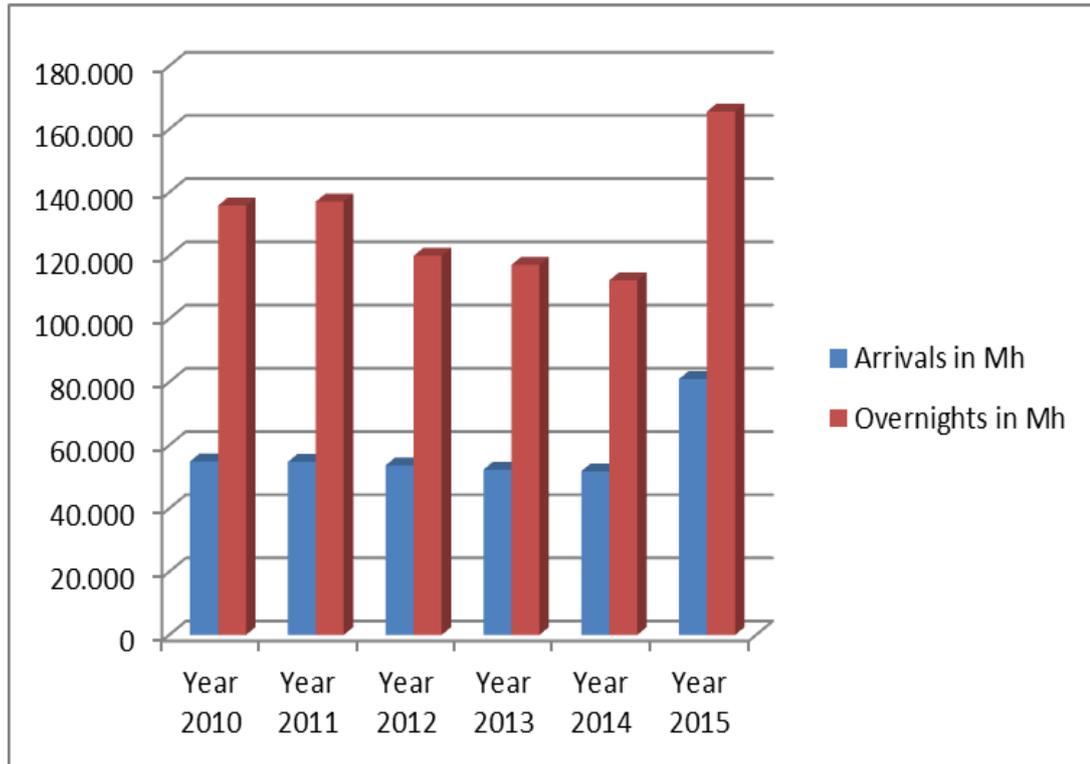


Figure II.1. Evolution of the number of arrivals and of overnight stays in tourist accommodation units in Mehedinti county

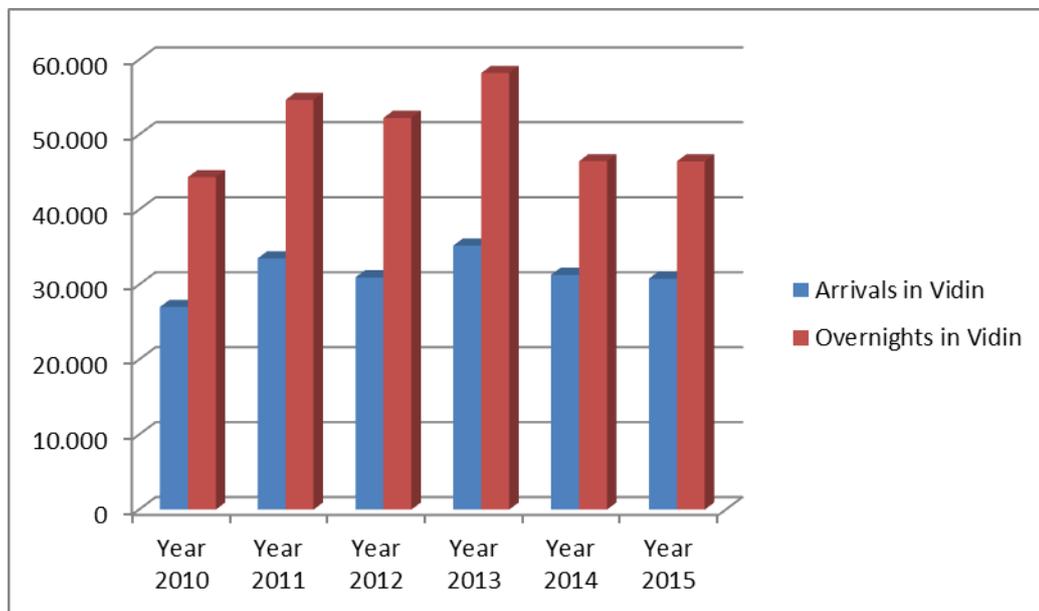


Figure II.2. Evolution of the number of arrivals and of overnight stays in tourist accommodation units in the district of Vidin

Analysis of registered tourist traffic in the tourist area Mehedinti-Vidin, in the period 2010-2015, is performed in order to capture volume, dynamics and structure, the main indicators in the idea of identifying the main tourist area streams. Thus, analyzing the data above we can draw the following conclusions:

- Tourist traffic records a fluctuated evolution in the period under review (number of accommodated tourists on the Romanian bank of the Danube and the number of overnight stays has fallen in 2010-2014, followed by an increase in 2015, on the Bulgarian bank of the Danube, but, it has fluctuated

throughout the period, with increases and decreases from year to year both the number of tourists stay and the number of overnight stays);

- There are also swinging the downward trend of the number of registered overnight stays for tourists on both sides of the Danube, which may indicate a loss of their interest in tourism products offered or a dissatisfaction generated by the quality of service.

- To have an overview, tourist flows from the Mehedinti county and district Vidin was compared to the situation at national level. It is noted that both Mehedinti county and district Vidin hold weights below 1% of the total number of tourists and total overnight stays registered nationally (Mehedinti County has a share of only about 0.80% of the total number of tourists and 0.70% of total overnight stays and Vidin district has a share of only about 0.49% of the total number of tourists and 0.22% of total overnight stays).

II.1.3. Social Environment

Mehedinti County

As territorial organization, Mehedinti County belongs to the South-West Oltenia Development Region which also contains, alongside Mehedinti county, other four counties: Dolj, Gorj, Olt, Valcea.

Local authority structures are represented by the county council, local councils, municipal, town and village. Mehedinti County has an area of 4,933 sq km, the territory comprising 5 urban units (2 municipalities and 3 cities) and 61 communes and 344 villages.

Table II.9. The population structure in Mehedinți

Year	Region / County	Total (people)	Urban	Rural	as a percentage of total		Loc./km ²
					Urban	Rural	
201	TOTAL	21.354.396	11.727.153	9.627.243	54,9	45,1	89,6
	South - West Oltenia	2.225.108	1.068.281	1.156.827	48,0	52,0	76,2
	Mehedinți	288.775	140.889	147.886	48,8	51,2	58,5
201	TOTAL	20.060.182	10.823.218	9.236.964	53,95	46,05	84,17
	South - West Oltenia	2.058.288	946.672	1.111.616	45,99	54,01	70,49
	Mehedinți	263.061	121.817	141.244	46,31	53,69	53,33
201	TOTAL	19.985.814	10.770.879	9.214.935	53,89	46,11	83,86
	South - West Oltenia	2.041.275	938.112	1.103.163	45,96	54,04	69,91
	Mehedinți	260.388	120.062	140.326	46,11	53,89	52,78
201	TOTAL	19.913.193	10.726.149	9.187.044	53,86	46,14	83,55
	South - West Oltenia	2.025.070	932.978	1.092.092	46,07	53,93	69,35
	Mehedinți	257.679	119.230	138.449	46,27	53,73	52,24

Source: INS, resident population on 1st of July 2014

Statistical data analysis reveals that Mehedinti county, with a population of 257 679 inhabitants, represents 12.73% of SV Oltenia region's population and 1.3% of the population. During the analysis, the number of inhabitants is decreasing,

and the decreasing of the number of inhabitants is a general trend, both at national and at regional and county level, but this decrease is more pronounced in the county, 10.77% in Mehedinți, compared to 8.99% and 6.75% in the region in the country. The population downward trend was also confirmed by the 2011 census which showed that in 2011, compared to January 2002 census, the county population decreased by 41 342 people. The population density was also down, 53.8 inhabitants / km² in the 2011 census, compared to 62.2 inhabitants / km² in 2002.

The decrease was driven primarily by higher manifestation of mortality compared to birth and generating a negative natural increase and migration phenomenon of population to other areas.

Residential distribution of the total population of the county has highlighted the predominance of rural population with a number of 138 449 people (53.73%) compared to the urban population, totaling 119 230 people (46.27%).

From the analysis of population dynamics in the period 2011-2014, the sharp decrease in the number of urban dwellers over the decline in rural areas, is highlighted. Therefore it can be concluded that Mehedinți County is a predominantly rural county, thus having a positive effect in the potential development of tourism in rural areas, with direct implications in raising living standards.

From a total of 257 658 people from July 1, 2014, women in Mehedinți is 50.70% (130 638 persons). Of these, more than half live in rural areas.

Table II.10. Population structure in 2014, by age and sex

Age	Total	Men	Women	Urban environment	Rural environment
Mehedinți County					
Total	257658	127020	130638	119230	138428
0 - 4	11152	5654	5498	5150	6002
5 - 9	12841	6639	6202	5820	7021
10 - 14	13844	7143	6701	5851	7993
15-19	14785	7649	7136	6668	8117
20-24	13496	7312	6184	6261	7235
25-29	14354	7712	6642	7115	7239
30-34	15526	7908	7618	7952	7574
35-39	19869	10119	9750	10451	9418
40-44	20671	10670	10001	10710	9961
45-49	20054	10429	9625	10903	9151
50-54	16338	8515	7823	8972	7366
55-59	19199	9491	9708	10321	8878
60-64	17553	8205	9348	8074	9479
65-69	14912	6712	8200	5447	9465
70-74	11100	4657	6443	3397	7703
75-79	11099	4291	6808	3096	8003
80-84	6764	2487	4277	1889	4875

85 si peste	4101	1427	2674	1153	2948
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Source: Tempo-online database of the NSI, *Resident population by age, sex, area of residence, macroregions, development regions and counties on July 1st*

Following the analysis of relevant age groups (Appendix 6), it identifies that we are witnessing, in Mehedinti, a slight increase in the share of young population (0-14 years) in total population. In contrast, among the adult population, the phenomenon of decreasing the share is manifested in the age groups 15-19 years old, 20-24 years old and 25-29 years. In parallel, the segment of 30-64 years is growing steadily during the analysis, the elderly (65 and over) increased.

All these symptoms in the population structure of Mehedinti County reveals the emergence of a slow but steady demographic ageing with negative implications for the economy and society, a phenomenon characteristic indeed in the entire SV region of Oltenia, which involves changes to the various subpopulations (school population, female population in the reproductive age population of working age, etc.).

Also, another phenomenon of migration is becoming more acute throughout the country and is one of the factors that influence population decline. In urban areas, the number of people who left, exceeds the number of people arriving, while in rural areas, the phenomenon is reversed.

For this reason, the necessary measures to allow attracting people, both in urban and in rural areas. One of the actions generating jobs could be created in the area of tourism development through a better exploitation of existing tourism resources and developing new forms of tourism⁵².

Vidin district

Vidin district has an area of 3,033 square kilometers or 2.73% of Bulgarian territory. The territory is divided into 11 municipalities (Belogradchik, Boinitsa, Bregovo, Vidin, Gramada, Dimovo, Kula, Markesh, Novo Selo, Ruzhintsi, Ciuprene) comprising a total of 140 localities, 7 towns and 133 villages.

Data from the last census of the National Statistics Institute, conducted in February 2011 showed that the district has: 101 018 persons, of which 63 907 people live in urban areas and 37 111 persons - in villages.

Vidin District has the smallest population of Bulgaria. Population in the district is 1.4% of the total population. It is evident from census data from 2001 and 2011 (listed in Annex 3) that the population declined in all municipalities in the region, only in Vidin district's population decreased by nearly 24% in the period between the two censuses. Share of population aged over 65 is 25.5%. It defines the area as a region of weak demographic structure.

The population of the district is unevenly distributed, ranging from population density 6.4 people per square kilometer, at 126.2 persons per square kilometer. The average population density in the region is 25.8 inhabitants per square kilometer. This is the lowest in the North-West Bulgaria, where the average population density of 44.42 person / sqkm.

The urban population of the district (of 63 907 inhabitants) represent 63.3% of the total population in 2011 increased by 3.4% compared to 2009, when the urban population accounted for 59.9%. The rural population (from 37 111 inhabitants) represent 36.7% of the total population.

Despite the increase in urban population in the area by 3.4% in 2011 compared with 2009, Vidin district has a low degree of urbanization. The reason is that five of the seven cities belong to the category of small (under 5,000 people). in Vidin is concentrated aprox 77% of the total urban population of the region.

⁵² Mehedinți county development strategy for 2014-2020, p. 10-13

The distribution of localities throughout the district is uneven, given the natural characteristics of the geographical area - varied topography, including the Danube plain, Prebalcani Mountains and Western Balkan Mountains, but the distances between places are not high. Depending on the terrain, villages are plain and mountain, being predominantly mountainous terrain. In principle, mountain villages have access to the road network republican, but some of them are difficult to access because of the poor state of the network road.

Vidin district territory is mostly agricultural, with a downward trend in the area of irrigated land.

Given the socio-economic condition of the area, actions aimed at creating local industries to increase employment skills of the workforce and productivity are necessary⁵³.

In 2004 the population was divided: 58 051 men, women 62141. In 2011 there were 48 568 men and 50 913 women.

Table II.11. Population by age on 31.12.2011

Age	Total	Men	Women	Urban Environment	Rural Environment
Vidin	99481	48568	50913	63054	36427
0 - 1	682	344	338	495	187
1-4	3077	1572	1505	2218	859
5-9	4044	2115	1929	2906	1138
10-14	4100	2082	2018	3054	1046
15-19	4706	2447	2259	3519	1187
20-24	4191	2232	1959	2962	1229
25-29	4891	2561	2265	3624	1202
30-34	5431	2809	2622	4130	1031
35-39	6609	3490	3119	5034	1575
40-44	6964	3686	3278	5256	1708
45-49	6024	3229	2795	4400	1866
50-54	6346	3350	2996	4480	1866
55-59	7478	3711	3767	4967	2511
60-64	9229	4274	4955	5320	3909
65-69	8003	3591	4412	3915	4088
70-74	5950	2539	3411	2486	3464
75-79	5660	2233	3427	2168	3492
80-84	3766	1466	2300	1325	2441
85-89	1950	680	1270	647	1303
90-94	398	138	260	135	263
95-99	44	17	27	12	32
100+	3	2	1	1	2

Source: Vidin District Development Strategy 2014-2020, pag.7-13

According to 2011 census, it was revealed that most of the population has secondary education (45.4%). 2nd study population is 8 years (27.55%) and 13.86% of the population has higher education.

⁵³ Administration of Vidin District, *District development strategy for 2014-2020*, pg.129-133

II.1.4. Technological Environment

Transport infrastructure

Mehedinți County

Mehedinti county is crossed by 3 Priority Axis of the European transport network (TEN-T): Priority Axis 7 (road) - the former Pan-European Corridor IV; Priority Axis 18 (Danube) - former Pan-European Corridor VII; Priority Axis 22 (Rail).

European roads that cross the county are: E70 (connecting Mehedinti county border with Bulgaria) and E771.

According to official statistics Mehedinti county had 2013 public roads with a total length of 1872 km: national roads (449 km), county roads (702 km) and roads (721 km). Public roads density reported in the county area is 37 km per 100 km² of land, slightly below the regional average of 38 km.

Development of transport infrastructure is a necessity for economic development and tourism in the county.

The total length of railways functional Mehedinti county in 2013 was 124 km of network density railways is 25.1 km per 1000 km² territory, to 33.9 km wide region. Railways in the county are entirely electrified. Difficulties in rail transport come from very poor state of infrastructure, steadily degraded or very outdated compared to new standards, in some cases even nonexistent. The state of infrastructure, lack of railway network in plains, diminished capacity of passenger and cargo are considered the main problems that cause failures in the rail system.

Regarding the air transport infrastructure, the county does not have its own air transport infrastructure. The nearest airports are in Craiova (112 km away from Drobeta) and Timisoara (218 km away).

Mehedinti County has two river ports: Port Orșova located at km 955 on the left bank of the Danube, and Port Drobeta Turnu Severin (built on the left bank of the Danube between km 930 and 934). Orsova and Drobeta ports and part of the European transport network TEN-T and will benefit from improvements to access roads.

Public transport, in the year 2013 consisted in a network of urban roads with a length of 317 km. The degree of modernization of the road infrastructure is quite high, 83.91% of the total are modernized, 266 km respectively.

Public transport is achieved only with buses and minibuses in the county being used environmental friendly means of transport (tram, trolley). The number of transport means owned by transport directed the county is quite low, in 2014 only 26 buses operating in the county, according to statistics, less than in 2013 with 29 pieces.

Regarding the telecommunications infrastructure in 2013, the number of units in Mehedinti Post and fixed telephony was 149, mostly located in rural and small urban. From a geographical perspective, the urban-rural gap remains: given that rural fixed telephone users are attended almost exclusively by a single supplier, the majority of users in urban areas can choose between several providers of fixed telephony services.

Vidin district

Vidin district is at a distance of 200 km from Bulgarian capital city of Sofia. The district has borders with two countries neighboring Romania and Serbia.

The position of the district has great importance in national and European transport network. The transport system is fairly well developed, with overland transport networks, rail, road and water, with the potential for air transport. Border crossings in the district are: Vrashka Ciuk, Bregovo, fluvial station Vidin, Vidin ferry, bridge Vidin-Calafat. 6 km from the town of Vidin there is an airport that can receive aircraft with a capacity of up to 50t. In 1999, by the order of the Ministry of Transport, the airport was closed.

The district has a high density of roads, but is of poor quality. Most of them are Class IV roads in very poor conditions⁵⁴.

Accommodation infrastructure

Establishments of tourist reception with tourist accommodation functions in Mehedinți County

Tourist activities is related to the presence of both natural and anthropogenic tourist resources and the existence of a material and technical base fine-tuned to provide satisfaction and comfort of tourists.

With outstanding attractions in Mehedinți county, especially the south, along the Danube River, were built over time a number of tourism accommodation.

The *analysis of the evolution of the accommodation capacity* in the period 2010 - 2015 is presented in the tables below.

Table II.12. Tourist reception with accommodation functions

Mehedinți County	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total	27	35	42	42	45	55
Hotels, youth hostels, hotels and motels	12	15	15	15	16	22
Students and school camps	-	-	-	-	-	-
Boarding houses	5	8	12	12	12	14
Rural locations	9	12	15	15	16	19
Villas	1	-	-	-	-	-
Tourist cottages	-	-	-	-	1	-

Source: National Institute of Statistics - structures of tourist reception with functions of tourist accommodation 31 July 2014

⁵⁴ Administration of Vidin District, *District development strategy for 2014-2020*, pg.113-126

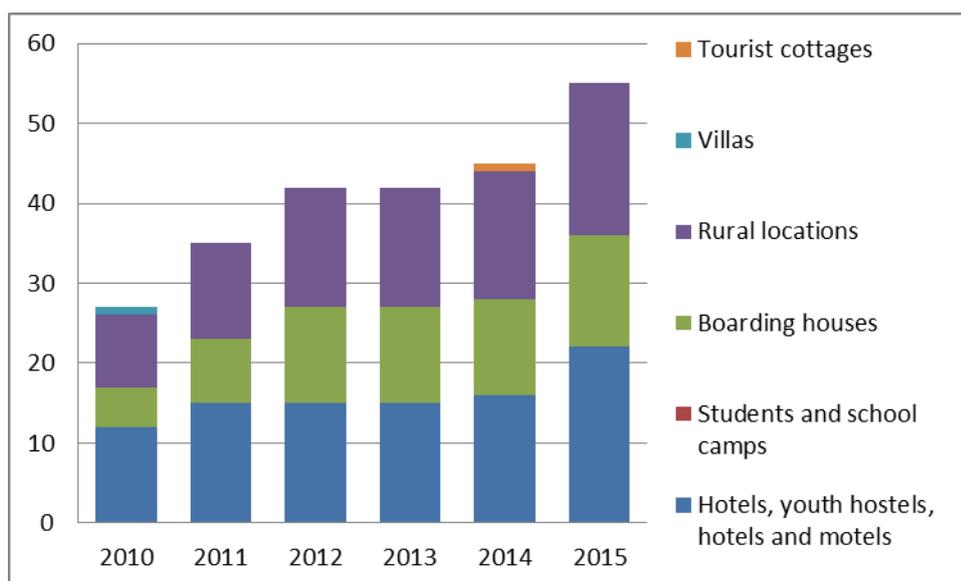


Figure II.3. - Evolution of the number of accommodation facilities in Mehedinti, on types of structures

Table II.13. Evolution of the number of beds in Mehedinti

	Total	Hotels	Hostels	Motels	Villas	Tourism cottages	Boarding houses	Rural Locations
2010	1524	836	281	74	34	:	123	176
2011	1587	894	267	74	:	:	171	181
2012	1772	928	286	74	:	:	247	237
2013	1768	928	286	74	:	:	243	237
2014	1804	962	299	:	:	18	249	276
2015	2118	1072	334	43	:	:	279	390

Source: INS, *Tourist accommodation capacity on types of tourist accommodation units, counties and localities*

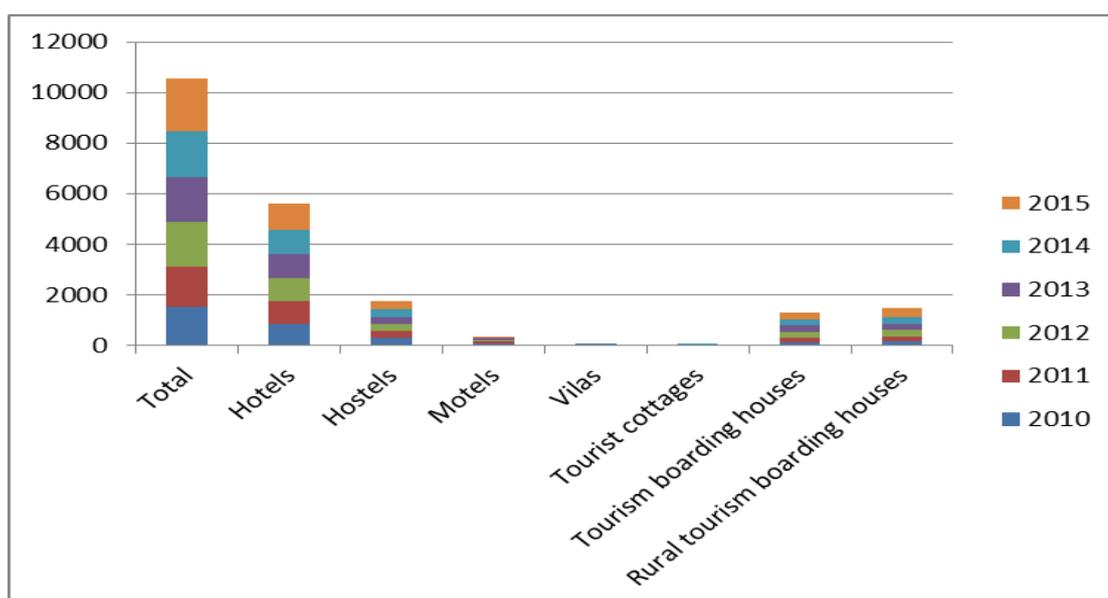


Figure II.4. - Evolution of the number of beds in tourist accommodation units in Mehedinti county, on types of units

During the analysis, the tourist accommodation capacity in the county recorded a significant increase (from 27-55 units and beds 1524-2118), and this increase is mainly due to the emergence of numerous guesthouses and agritourism. On the other hand, there is an important change in the structure of accommodation in the county. If 2010 hotels held 54.86% of the number of beds in 2015 only 50.61% of the beds in the county are owned by hotels.

To have an overall accommodation capacity of Mehedinți county was compared to the situation at national level.

Table II.14. Tourist accommodation capacity in Mehedinți county compared to total of the country

Indicators	Year 2010	Year 2011	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014	Year 2015
Total country	311.698	278.503	301.109	305.707	311.288	328.313
Mehedinți County	1524	1587	1772	1768	1804	2118
% Mh in country total	0,49	0,57	0,59	0,58	0,58	0,65

Source: INS, Tempo-online database, *Existing tourist accommodation capacity by types of tourist accommodation structures, counties and localities*

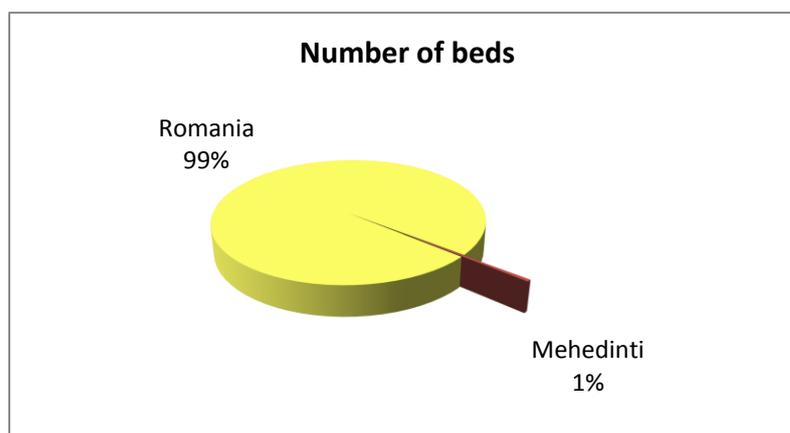


Figure II.5. - The percentage of accommodation in Mehedinți county ranked in total country

Analyzing the data presented, it appears that only 0.65% of the number of beds available at national level is in Mehedinți county, the county is ahead of other counties, such as Constanta, Brasov, Valcea, or even Caras Severin.

For an analysis of tourist accommodation structures in Mehedinți county were analyzed units classified in the database under the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism (Appendix 7).

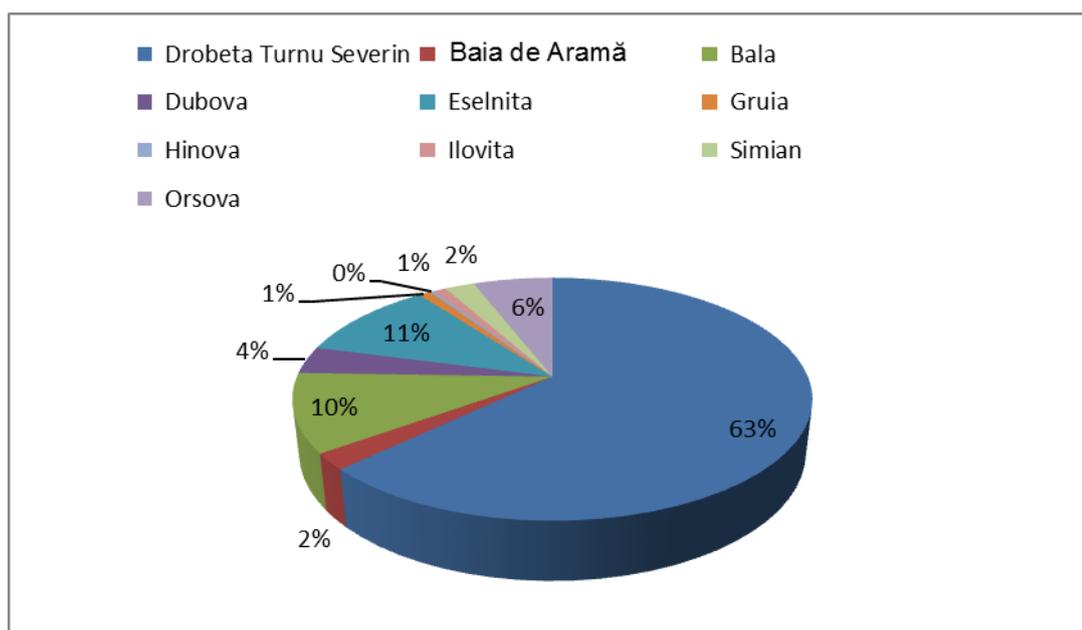


Figure II.6. - Structure of classified accommodation units in Mehedinți county, by municipalities

Thus, on 31.12.2012, in the county of Mehedinți, they are recorded 54 establishments of tourist reception with functions of tourists with a total of 1985 seats, the majority (62.87%) concentrated in Drobeta Turnu Severin, but also in places tourism potential such as: Bala (10.48%), Eșelnița (10.63%) Orșova (5.89%) (see Appendix 8).

Establishments of tourist reception with accommodation functions in Vidin District

Analysis of the evolution of the accommodation capacity in the period 2010 - 2015 is presented in the tables below.

Table II.15. Tourist receptions with tourist accommodation functions

Vidin County	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total	33	45	33	36	36	32
1 - 2 stars	20	32	22	22	22	18
3 stars	12	12	10	13	13	13
4 - 5 stars	1	1	1	1	1	1

Source: National Statistical Institute, Republic of Bulgaria, the units accommodation areas, regions and districts, updated 24/02/2016, <http://www.nsi.bg/en/content/7067/annual-data>

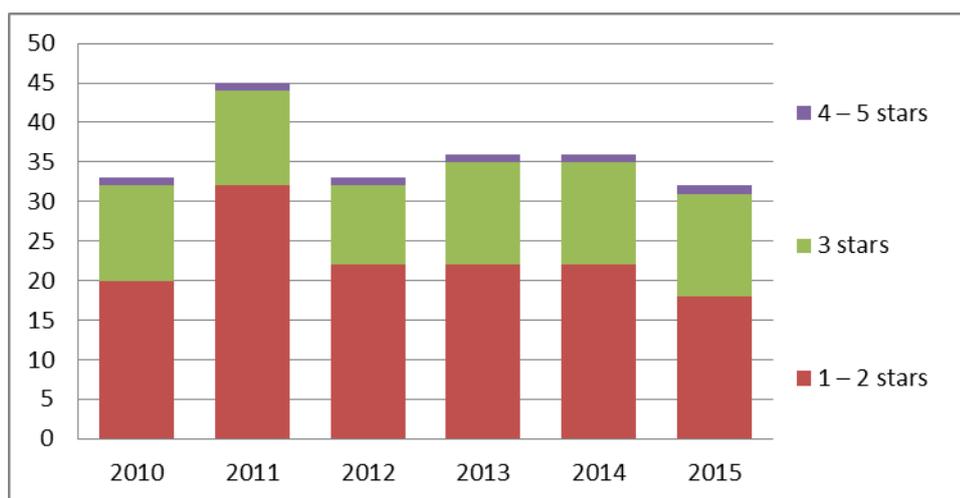


Figure II.7. - Progress of accommodation structures in Vidin district, classified by type of establishment

Table II.16. Evolution of the number of beds by types of classified structures in Vidin district

An	Total	1 - 2 stele	3 stele	4 - 5 stele
2010	895	362	446	87
2011	1012	517	408	87
2012	891	435	369	87
2013	955	362	496	97
2014	960	362	507	91
2015	889	298	500	91

Source: NSI, Republic of Bulgaria, *The accommodation units by areas, regions and districts*, updated 24/02/2016, <http://www.nsi.bg/en/content/7067/annual-data>

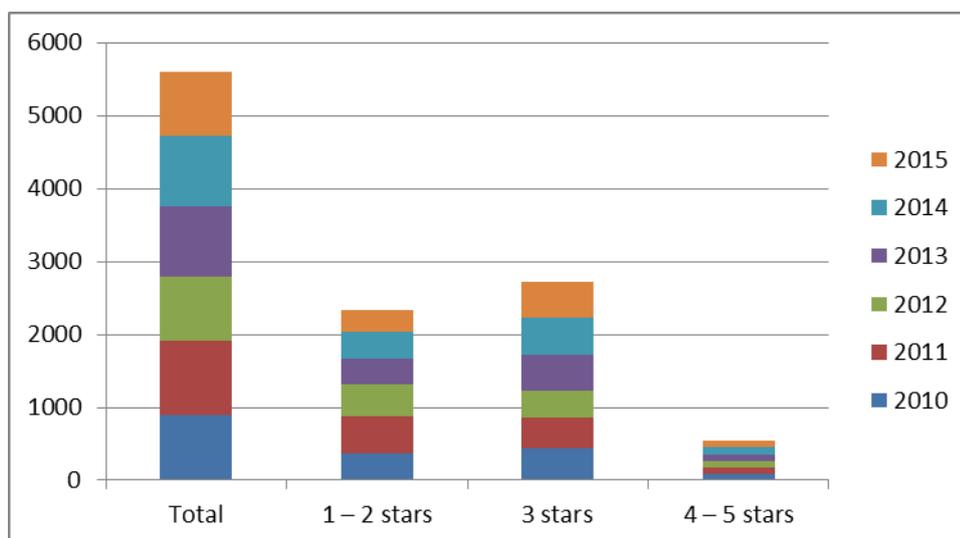


Figure II.8 - Evolution of the number of seats in tourist accommodation units in Vidin district, classified by type of units

During the analysis, the tourism capacity of accommodation in the county records fluctuated, with a peak growth in 2011 (from 33-45 units and 895-1012 beds) and this increase is due mainly to the increase of the number of units of 1-2 stars.

The accommodation capacity of Vidin District was compared to the situation at national level to illustrate the overview.

Table II.17. Tourist accommodation capacity compared to total country Vidin District

Indicators	Year 2010	Year 2011	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014	Year 2015
total Country	283.641	283.251	301.140	302.433	314.257	322.465
Vidin county	895	1012	891	955	960	889
%Vidin in country total	0,32%	0,36%	0,30%	0,32%	0,31%	0,28%

Source: NSI, Republic of Bulgaria, *the accommodation units by areas, regions and districts*, updated 24/02/2016, <http://www.nsi.bg/en/content/7067/annual-data>

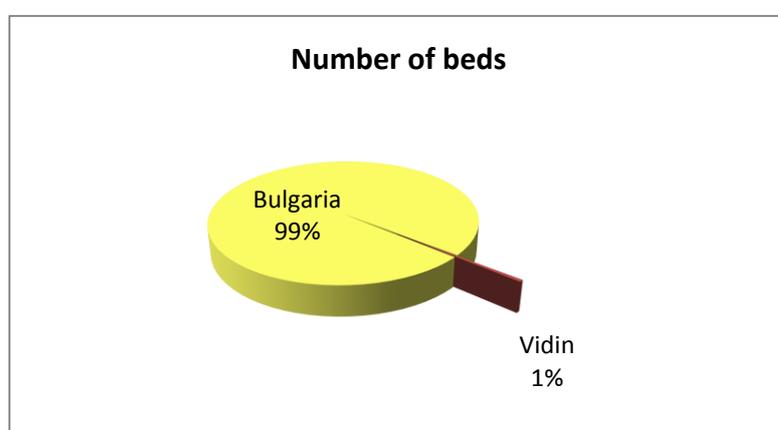


Figure II.9. - The percentage of classified accommodation units in Vidin district in total country

Analyzing the presented data, it appears that in 2015, only 0.28% of the number of beds available at national level is in Vidin district, the county is ahead of other counties, and units are mainly concentrated in Vidin and Belogradchik (see Appendix 9).

II.2. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats tourist destination (SWOT analysis)

Making strategic decisions on the definition of the mission of developing the tourism sector in the counties of Mehedinti and Vidin, setting strategic objectives and the strategy needed to achieve the mission, implementation of the plan to materialize the strategy is based on a comprehensive analysis and assessment of the environment in which tourist destination is located Mehedinti - Vidin, the situation in this competitive environment.

The analysis method used in this sense, is generically SWOT, which is the acronym of the words Strengths (forces, strengths), Weaknesses (weaknesses, weaknesses), Opportunities (opportunities, opportunities) and Threats (threats). The first two concern the tourist destination and reflects its position and the last two refer to reflect its impact on the environment and tourism destination.

According to research done in this area, the tourist area Mehedinti-Vidin highlights the following issues⁵⁵:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A climate conducive to tourism ○ A favorable geographical position with varied terrain (mountains, plateaus and plains); ○ Vidin District is a strategic point in the national transportation network; ○ A presence of two European roads crossing Mehedinti county and a growing upgraded Infrastructure of National Roads ○ Bridges over the Danube at Drobeta Turnu Severin and Vidin; ○ The existence of both a river ports Mehedinti county and district Vidin ○ Natural attractions and a great human value and attractiveness; ○ A historical-cultural heritage; ○ Ethnography and folklore; ○ A good cross-border relations with neighboring regions in serbia; ○ An unpolluted environment and the possibility of practicing eco-environmental tourism; ○ Conservation of traditions and customs; ○ Sol favorable for practicing a form of viticulture and tourism "wine road"; ○ A balanced gender structure of the population in mehedinti county, with a slight increase in the share of young population (0-14 years) in total population; ○ A positive balance of internal migration of the population from mehedinti county, the change of domicile in the countryside with the possibility of practicing agro-tourism; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In the counties of Mehedinti and Vidin there are no motorways ; low density of public roads and Mehedinti counties reported by the area; ○ poor condition of the transport infrastructure in the district of ; access from highways to town centers, towns and cities in Mehedinti county is inadequate; ○ Mehedinti and Vidin do not have their own air transport infrastructure; ○ a number of means of transport in Mehedinti, owned regies transport is reduced; ○ the material and technical base of tourism is insufficient and partially worn; ○ Foreign investment is low in tourism; ○ uneven development between urban and non-urbanized territories; ○ unfavorable demographic structure; ○ high level of unemployment; ○ Low income of a population with a high risk of poverty; ○ lack of experience and capacity for assimilation of European funds; ○ specific concentration of tourist infrastructure in municipalities and county seats; ○ Destination Management poorly; ○ Dependence on large foreign tour operators; ○ Low representation of local tourist offer in the national and local travel agencies;

⁵⁵ 1) Republic of Bulgaria, Vidin District Governor, Vidin district development strategy for 2014-2020, <http://www.raris.org/bazaznanja/download/bugarska/opsta-dokumenta/Regional%20development%20strategy%20of%20region%20Vidin%202014-2020.pdf>

2) Mehedinți County development strategy for 2014-2020, <http://www.informatiadeseverin.ro/is/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Strategia-de-dezvoltare-CJ-Mehedinti-2014-2020.pdf>

3) *Stanislav Ivanov and Miroslava Dimitrova*, European Tourism Planning and Organisation Systems, Vol.II. National case studies, Channel View, 2013, Chapter 4 Bulgaria, C. Costa, E. Panyik & D. Buhalis (eds.), pg. 5

4) Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark -The trade council, Tourism sector – Bulgaria, prepared by the Danish embassy in Sofia, september 2014

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A price competitive tourist destinations in relation to the union; ○ Membership as a member of the european union; ○ Development work for romania and bulgaria as a tourism brand; ○ Danube river, the pan-european corridor, provides conditions for developing cruises or sport fishing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Low number and concentrated in a county municipality of travel agencies; ○ Improper maintenance of tourist sites;
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Modernization of Sofia and Vidin railway road E 79; ○ Improving the road network; ○ Stimulating SME development and creating jobs in tourism; ○ Development of different forms of tourism ecotourism, rural tourism, cultural and biological; ○ Attracting foreign direct investment; ○ The availability of European funds for tourism development; ○ Human resource development in tourism through training and retraining; ○ A large number of inhabitants in rural areas increases the possibilities of developing tourism business, to implement local development programs, to increase the attractiveness of rural areas; ○ Implementation of several projects for the Romanian section of the Danube in the Danube Strategy; ○ Emergence of mobile operators that fosters the development of telecommunications infrastructure; ○ A growing demand for special forms of tourism manifested in major emitting countries of tourists; ○ A business tourism, conferences and exhibitions represents development opportunities; ○ Interest in setting up a cluster; ○ European Union Strategy for the Danube Region offers the opportunity to have direct connections better and faster with other countries bordering the Danube. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Balkan peninsula political instability; ○ Continuing negative demographic trends (aging population, depopulation, negative population growth) with negative implications for the economy and society; ○ Deepening dependence (ratio of elderly and active), caused by aging population; ○ Drastic decreases in mehedinti's projected number of 2050, all age segments; ○ Migration and emigration of the population; ○ Unstable political framework; ○ Financial and fiscal policy that does not stimulate smes; ○ Administration and a cumbersome bureaucracy at national level; ○ Strong national and international competition in tourism; ○ Low entrepreneurial activity; ○ Difficult integration of various occupations who have been made redundant; ○ Reluctance of traders in hiring young, inexperienced people over 45 years.

Conclusions of the chapter

From a legal standpoint, the tourist activity is well regulated in both counties surveyed ensuring the premises of an activity tourism sustainable, but repeated legislative changes and the organization of the Ministry of Tourism, both Romania and Bulgaria, have affected the situation of tourism in Mehedinti - Vidin area. Although in recent years, at political-legal level, feels improvement and stability in terms of tourism in Romania and Bulgaria, excessive bureaucracy still exists in the system and poses a serious threat to the smooth running of tourism activities and also for the progress of tourism in the Mehedinti - Vidinarea.

From an economic perspective, the tourism market study area is influenced by the general evolution of the national economy manifested by fluctuations in inflation, which generates multiple changes in setting tariffs and prices of services and products offered to tourists and instability tariff may be a factor braking tourist demand. However, changes occur on the downside of this indicator positive economic effect on the purchasing power of the population, this represents a potential factor for the development of tourism activity in the studied area by increasing demand for tourism services and products.

As for the consumer preferences of the population, tourism services segment occupies a comparable place to the food products, factor subjected in its monthly evolution to tourist influence of seasonality.

Competition in the tourism sector is low both in Mehedinti and in Vidin district, businesses operating in this sector representing a rate not exceeding 2% of all enterprises active in each county.

From a demographic perspective, Vidin District is a region with weak demographic structure. Viewed against the background of the entire country, the district territory is sparsely populated, with territories depopulated.

Vidin district follows the growing trend of urban population and the reduce trend of rural population (typically for the whole country). Compared to the proportion of rural population in the country (27.5%), Vidin district is above the average share (accounting for 36.7%). The reasons for urban population growth in the area are related to looking for opportunities to work and use labor market.

The urbanization rate is reduced in the district, five of the seven cities of its being small (under 5,000 people) and only in the city of Vidin is concentrated about 77% of the total urban population of the region.

The distribution of localities throughout the district is uneven, but the distances between places are not high. In principle, municipalities are mountainous and have access to the republican road network, although some roads are in poor condition.

From Mehedinti county analysis of population dynamics in the period 2011-2014 it highlights the sharp decrease in the number of urban dwellers to rural decline, Mehedinti County is a predominantly rural county, working with positive effects on tourism development opportunities in rural areas.

Although the potential is diversified, unfortunately the vast majority of existing accommodation capacities fall into categories 2 and 3-star accommodation capacity superior classification (4 and 5 stars) is limited. Also, it may be remarked, scale agro-tourism, supported by increasing the number of rural locations.

The tourism infrastructure in the region (including the leisure infrastructure and quality of accommodation services) reflects a low qualitative standard compared to European competition standards.

However, tourism is an economic sector with a valuable development potential still untapped enough and could become an attractive source of both investors and tourists (Romanian and foreign).

The Danube River is an important resource for industry and tourism and the tourism potential of the Danube can increase the number of foreign tourists visiting the region, now their number is reduced.

An opportunity to attract foreign tourists to the region, is also the increased cooperation between air carriers and travel agencies.

Investment in upgrading infrastructure and tourist resorts can certainly revive tourism in this region, and this in turn can help the economic growth of the region⁵⁶.

Other aspects of the Mehedinti - Vidin tourist area are⁵⁷:

- Lack of specialized staff and services at competitive standards at European level;
- Reduced economic effects (fiscal deficit and escapism).
- The sights are not integrated, each objective presenting individual value, tourist circuits being underdeveloped ;
- Small accessibility of points of tourist interest, due to both transport and tourism infrastructure (see Appendix 5).
- Polarized and centralized distribution of travel agencies and contact points at national level, something that affects the existing tourism offer;
- Promoting Romania and Bulgaria as a tourist destination is insufficient; promotion of tourism in the same situation; oriented culture in this respect is missing (for example, the almost complete lack of tourist information centers).
- Airport infrastructure is insufficiently developed both in Romania and in Bulgaria: in Romania, there is only one world class airport in Bucharest; airports in Craiova, Timisoara respectively class are local, even if they receive low-cost flights that operate internationally. In Bulgaria, there are 4 major airports: Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna and Bourgas. 6 km from the town of Vidin there is an airport that can receive local class aircraft up to 50 t, but it was closed in 1999 by order of the Ministry of Transport.
- In terms of general infrastructure - network of transport routes - and the territorial concentration of tourism resources, individualized following differences: transport infrastructure is poor in administrative-territorial units registering a high concentration of tourism resources, both natural and man; This deficiency is found directly rather low degree of accessibility of sightseeing.
- Usual tourist circuits of tour operators are reduced to a few tracks that do not include tourist area subject to study. Limiting tourist routes, in most cases, show dysfunctions amount of territory in terms of road infrastructure and accommodation proximity to settlements in which to sleep - for large groups - exclude differentiation circuits.

Given the socio-economic condition of the area, are necessary strategies and actions aimed at creating local industries and exploitation of unused potential in unconventional tourism to increase the employment skills of the workforce and productivity.

⁵⁶ Planul de dezvoltare regională Sud – Vest Oltenia 2014-2020, iunie 2014 (regional development plan for South-West Oltenia 2014-2020), <http://www.adroltenia.ro/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/PDR-SV-Oltenia-2014-2020-1.pdf>

⁵⁷ Studiul 7. Activitățile și infrastructura turistică (2014), parte din Strategia Teritorială a României, beneficiar Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Administrației Publice, p. 55-56 (Study no. 7. Tourism activities and infrastructure 2014, part of the Territorial Strategy of Romania, beneficiary Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration)

III. ESTABLISHING THE GENERAL GOAL AND THE SPECIFIC GOALS IN TERMS OF MARKETING. GUIDELINES FOR THE VALUABLE USE OF JOINT TOURISTIC POTENTIAL

Analysing the internal and external environment of the Mehedinti - Vidin touristic area, one may conclude that the area has a high touristic potential, but a promotional programme is needed for a homogeneous development and use of the joint natural and cultural values of the above mentioned touristic destination. Marketing objectives shall be established according to the results of the SWOT and PEST analysis.

III.1 General Goal

The general goal of this marketing programme is the homogeneous promotion of the Mehedinti - Vidin touristic area as a destination for holidays and travels on the internal and external market.

III.2 Specific objectives

The specific objective of this marketing programme can be synthesized as:

1. Contributing to the sustainable economic, social and cultural development of the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic area;
2. Increasing the number of stays in the Mehedinti-Vidin area;
3. Increasing the awareness of the local communities on the heritage of the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic area;
4. The creation of a solid and sustainable partnership between the Mehedinti county and the Vidin district, as a tool of sustainable Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border cooperation, with a view to overcoming physical, social and cultural barriers and better using intrinsically generated opportunities.

III.3 Marketing strategies

The marketing strategy establishes the way to achieve marketing goals⁵⁸:

Table III. Marketing objectives and strategies

Marketing objectives	Marketing strategies
1. The sustainable economic, social and cultural development of the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic area	Joint actions aiming at creating key/specific touristic products and services, based on the natural and cultural heritage, as well as revigorating traditions, with a view to promoting local tourism and creating opportunities for economic development;
2. Increasing the number of stays in the Mehedinti-Vidin area;	Joint actions aiming at improving the visibility of the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic destination, its positive image among potential tourists by improving publicity, through the creation of highly attractive specific routes, through Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border cooperation between

⁵⁸ after Stăncioiu A. F. – *Strategii de marketing în turism*, Ed. Economică, 2000, p.177-181

Marketing objectives	Marketing strategies
	tourism bodies
3. Increasing the awareness of the local communities on the heritage of the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic area;	Organising informative events Organising events promoting joint crafts and traditions Creating and disseminating promotional materials Internet presentation Media advertising
4. Increasing the awareness of the Mehedinti-Vidin area as a touristic destination for national tourists (Romanian and Bulgarian residents)	Creating and disseminating promotional materials Media advertising Participation in regional, national and international tourism fairs Internet presentation
5. Increasing the awareness of the Mehedinti-Vidin area as a touristic destination for foreign tourists (outside Romania and Bulgaria)	Creating and disseminating promotional materials Media advertising Participation in tourism fairs Internet presentation
6. Information on the possibility to access cross-border thematic routes based on the unique natural and cultural cross-border heritage: - the "green-blue" touristic route - the "culture and history" touristic route - the "nature" touristic route	Creating highly attractive specific routes in the Mehedinti-Vidin area Creating and disseminating promotional materials Participation in tourism fairs Internet presentation
7. Revigorating and improving the visibility of the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic area	Creating and disseminating promotional materials Participation in national and international tourism fairs Internet presentation Media advertising
8. Equipping distribution channels with promotional materials	Creating and disseminating promotional materials to the stakeholders in distribution channels Internet presentation
9. Doing away with the negative image of the touristic area, that potential tourists might have	Creating and disseminating promotional materials Participation in tourism fairs Internet presentation
10. Revigorating and improving publicity	Creating and disseminating promotional materials Participation in tourism fairs Internet presentation Media advertising
11. Creating a solid and sustainable partnership between the Mehedinti county and the Vidin district	Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border cooperation between tourism bodies Overcoming physical, social and cultural barriers Suitably use intrinsically generated opportunities

III.4 Recommending touristic attractions and promotion activities for the unitary development and use of the joint natural and cultural values of the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic area

Touristic attractions recommended for a homogeneous use of the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic area

The effort to promote the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic area mostly consists of "conceptualizing" this touristic destination: The identity of the Mehedinți-Vidin touristic area should uniquely position the envisaged territory, in terms of touristic potential, natural resources, history and civilisation.

The analysis of the data collected from the research based on the questionnaire⁵⁹ applied in the accommodation facilities in the Mehedinti county and the Vidin district has showed the touristic sights most known and appreciated by tourists, where the highest number of visitors is seen in the analysed counties.

The analysis of the answers received for the question: "Indicate the touristic sights (natural, anthropic, cultural, folklore and festivals) that your tourists want to visit in Mehedinti/Vidin" shows that the appointed touristic sights are as follows:

- in the Mehedinti county: the Theodor Costescu Cultural Palace (Drobeta Turnu-Severin); the Water Castle (Drobeta Turnu-Severin), the Medieval Fortress of Severin (Drobeta Turnu-Severin); museums; the Sf. Ana Monastery (Orșova); the Strehaia Monastery (Strehaia); cruise on the Danube (the Cazane area); the Tricule Fortress, the Veterani Cave, the "cazane" of the Danube, the Danube Gorges, Decebal's statue (the Cazane area), the Karst Complex in Ponoarele (the Natural Bridge of Ponoarele, also called God's Bridge, the Bridge Cave, limestone pavements, the Zaton Lake), the Isverna area - Isverna Cave; the Garla Mare - Maglavit and Blahnita Protected Natural Areas;

- in the Vidin district: the town of Vidin (the Baba Vida Fortress, the Mosque of Osman Pazvantoglu, the Koluka Turkish Mansion, the Cross-shaped Barracks, the Synagogue, the Old Turkish Mail Office, the Municipal Theatre of Vidin), Kula Castra Martis, the Novo Selo Church, the Belogradchik Fortress; kayak-canoeing on the Danube; the Novo Selo beach; the Koshava beach; the Golia Island beach; the mountain formations in Belogradchik; the Chuprene Biosphere Reservation; the Rabisha Lake; the Magura Cave.

Synthesizing, the touristic sights considered to be the main reasons for trips to the area are as follows: The Danube with calm waters or waters that seem to "boil" in uniquely picturesque calcar cuves, as well as its sunny and tempting beaches; the history and culture-fraught towns on the Bulgarian and the Romanian shores of the Danube, such as Vidin, Belogradchik, Drobeta Turnu-Severin; the breath-taking natural landscapes of Belogradchik, Ponoarele or Isverna; the Chuprene Biosphere Reserve and the Garla Mare - Maglavit Protected Natural Area, the Blahnita Protected Natural Area, the Rabisha and Zaton lakes or the Magura and Isverna Caves.

Therefore, since the touristic sights appointed by the respondents of the study as the most notorious among tourists are also the most attractive as well (attractiveness takes into account touristic resources, the technical and material facilities and the general infrastructure), the following areas of the Mehedinti and Vidin counties are recommended to be promoted through specific actions:

- I. the Danube with calm waters or waters that seem to "boil" in uniquely picturesque calcar cuves, as well as its sunny and tempting beaches. The following are proposed for this area:

⁵⁹ See Annex 10

1. The "green-blue" touristic area in the Mehedinti county with the following sights: cruise on the Danube, visiting the Tricule Fortress, the "cazane" of the Danube, the Danube Gorges, Decebal's status, the Veterani Cave;
 2. The "green-blue" touristic route in the Vidin district, with the following touristic sights: kayak-canoeing on the Danube, visiting the Novo Selo Beach; the Koshava Beach, the Golia Island Beach;
- II. towns fraught with history and culture. Cultural tourism is undertaken in these areas, which is why the following route is proposed:
1. The touristic area "Culture and history in the Mehedinti county", with the following sights: the Drobeta Turnu Severin city (visiting the Water Castle, the Medieval Fortress of Severin and the Theodor Costescu Cultural Palace); the Sf. Ana Monastery; the Strehaiia Monastery; museums.
 2. The touristic area "Culture and history in the Vidin district", with the following sights: the town of Vidin (the Baba Vida Fortress, the Mosque of Osman Pazvantoglu, the Koluka Turkish Mansion, the Cross-shaped Barracks, the Synagogue, the Old Turkish Mail Office, the Municipal Theatre of Vidin), Kula Castra Martis, the Novo Selo Church, the Belogradchik Fortress; museums.
- III. breath-taking natural landscapes. The following are proposed for such sights:
1. "Route in the nature of the Mehedinti county", with visits to the following sights: the Karst Complex in Ponoarele (the Natural Bridge of Ponoarele, also called God's Bridge, the Bridge Cave, limestone pavements, the Zaton Lake), the Isverna area - Isverna Cave; the Garla Mare - Maglavit and Blahnita Protected Natural Areas.
 2. "Route in the nature of the Vidin district", with visits to the following sights: the mountain formations of Belogradchik; the Chuprene Biosphere Reservation; the Rabisha Lake; the Magura Cave.

Specific promotion actions

The attractive elements of the natural framework have so far been capitalized in a differentiated manner, depending on the proximity and possibilities of access to the main centres of touristic interest.

A significant advertising effort should be undertaken to promote the joint touristic sights of the Mehedinti - Vidin area, in order to occupy a better position on the touristic market. To this purpose, the most efficient promotion actions should be considered, that may result in an enhanced number of Romanian and foreign tourists in the promoted sights; ensuring a sustainable development of tourism so that the environmental, cultural and heritage richness of the Mehedinti-Vidin area is equally appreciated in the present and kept for future generations; the explicit recognition of the area and its specificities, creating social responsibility for the community's destiny; developing a favourable attitude towards the touristic product; increasing the Romanian and Bulgarian population's awareness of the national touristic richness and the will to share it with guests.

Touristic promotion actions aim at both attracting new customers and maintaining the existing ones, targeting both the general public and the relevant groups. The essential issue is the efficiency of promotion, i.e. choosing the

method with the most significant impact on the public. The conveyed message should envisage three main goals: catching attention, maintaining attention and convincing the public⁶⁰. Advertising is highly important in touristic promotion, since it deals with creating a favourable image of the touristic sight/destination and with attracting potential tourists. Touristic advertising includes transmission of messages with specific objectives: increasing the awareness of the touristic potential of the area, becoming informed on the major sights, creating and improving the image of the touristic destination, attracting new tourists.

The analysis of the data collected from the questionnaire⁶¹ shows a range of highly important aspects for the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic destination: the motivation for choosing the area as a touristic destination, the average duration of the stay in the area, the notoriousness of the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic destination, the importance of promotion activities to revigorate tourism in the region and the promotion methods preferred by accommodation facilities in order to inform tourists and promote the touristic area.

The analysis of the answers received to the questionnaire shows the importance of the natural and anthropic potential in motivating tourists to appoint the Mehedinti-Vidin area as a touristic destination, as about 80% of the respondents referred to the touristic potential as the main criterion for choosing the touristic destination, with the following category of tourists (8%) visiting the area due to its specificities. The reason for the tourists' travel (mainly to visit and become acquainted with the natural and cultural heritage, with about 84% of the answers) implicitly generates an average duration of the stay of 2-3 days (as 84% of the tourists spend no more than a week-end in the accommodation facilities of the Mehedinti-Vidin area), and those who come to relax (10% of the tourists) spend, especially during summer, up to 7 days in the accommodation facilities of the area (especially in those located next to the Danube or with mountain formations), with 1-day stays (mainly for business meetings) occupying the second to last place, with a percentage of 5%.

Promotion activities playing a direct part in the revigoration of tourism in the area are highly important for all touristic facilities in the Mehedinti-Vidin area.

The analysis of answers regarding the media channels preferred by accommodation facilities for informing tourists and for promoting their own business and the touristic area, the most appreciated means of promotion among touristic facilities in Mehedinti-Vidin is the internet (with a grade of 8), as well as promotional materials (guides, maps, souvenirs, etc., with an average grade of 7), and travel agents (with an average grade of 5) and relevant events (tourism fairs/exhibitions, with an average grade of 6).

Therefore, in terms of promotion trends, the following should be insisted upon in promoting the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic destination:

- media channels for information: internet, media, outdoor advertising
- free-of-charge distribution of touristic promotion materials (guides, maps, movies, brochures) , mostly to tourists, upon participation in fairs, festivals, as well as to bodies involved on the market (e.g. local public administrations, tourist information centres, etc.), for a proper promotion and attraction of as many tourists as possible to the promoted touristic destination.
- Informative movies

⁶⁰ Chartered Institute of Marketing, Business Communications, BPP Publishing Ltd, UK, 1997, pg. 147

⁶¹ See Annex 10

- organisation of events for the awareness and information of local staff regarding the natural and cultural heritage and its promotion for a sustainable economic development
- promotion of joint crafts and traditions

In terms of the message and graphic appearance of advertising materials, they should meet requirements regarding:

- memorability - a comprehensive and persuasive message,
- emotional approach,
- originality, creativity and harmony of colours,
- accessibility,
- general impact - the use of symbolic elements representative for the promoted area.

A). Internet

Due to its intrinsic features of quickly sending information, internet is used for media communication. The main communication channel used in this environment is the website, defined as a range of webpages visible in a browser, with a distinct and homogeneous content, generating audience and identified through a unique domain name.

The webpage is a document (usually HTML) specific to the internet, that can be viewed by a user in a browser and can be displayed on the computer.

The development of technology, the appearance of online marketing and the explosion of information on the internet have revolutioned touristic intermediation, since more and more tourists take their information directly through the internet, in a much more efficient manner.

Enhanced access to internet, increased online trade, the quite cheap means of promotion and the accessibility of internet are just some of the reasons we recommend this type of promotion. To this purpose, a portal presenting the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic destination should be built.

The presentation website is very important since, once launched, it becomes the "image" of the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic destination and homogeneously represents it in terms of the travel offer. For the same purpose, audio and video materials with the presentation of the touristic destination and the promoted touristic sights should also be included. In general, an easy to use and attractive interface should be chosen, that may provide the visitor with as much information as possible regarding the promoted sights. The touristic portal of the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic destination should be promoted in turn by including the address on printed advertising materials. In our case, a major impact on the audience could be ensured by choosing one of the following domains: turism-mehedinti-vidin.ro, mehedinti-vidin-turism.ro, portal-turistic-mehedinti-vidin.ro, turism-in-mehedinti-vidin.ro, turism-vacante-mehedinti-vidin.ro, destinatie-turism-mehedinti-vidin.ro, destinatie-vacanta-mehedinti-vidin.ro, mehedinti-vidin-turism-destinatii.ro, descopera-mehedinti-vidin.ro, vizitati-mehedinti-vidin.ro, descoperiti-mehedinti-vidin.ro

The media

Publicity through the media (written press, radio and TV) is an efficient means to promote the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic area. In order to achieve the expected impact, press releases should be published in local/regional newspapers, and news should be broadcast in local/regional radio and TV stations. They help advertise the project, the financing programme, promoting the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic area (sights, touristic routes, etc.).

Outdoor advertising

Outdoor advertising is that type of advertising that can be seen by the audience outside their homes. Outdoor advertising includes many forms and formats to expose the advertising message. The most frequently used outdoor advertising materials are advertising materials used inside/outside buildings, public places: posters, boards, banners, meshes, signs. They are an efficient way to convey an advertising message. The following are recommended for promoting the touristic potential of the Mehedinti-Vidin area: placing/posting posters in the main settlements in the project area, i.e. the Mehedinti-Vidin area, in places with visibility and high flow of population.

B). Printed advertising materials

The nature of touristic services assigns great importance to printed advertising materials. Basically, no industry in the area of physical goods uses such an amount of printing (guides, maps, brochures) as the travel industry; the creation, distribution and wide use of printed materials is one of the distinctive features of tourism.

Publicity through printed materials is used by most travel companies, since it is the most practical way to promote a touristic destination by editing and distributing guides, maps, brochures, etc., with information and pictures attracting the attention of potential tourists.

Seven main functions of printed materials can be identified (according to Victor Middleton):

- *creating notoriousness* (most potential customers receive their first information regarding a touristic offer by means of a brochure seen in the hotel, in a travel agency or in an airport; they promote the touristic product or service using promotional messages and symbols with a view to stimulating purchase);
- *facilitating purchase* (they allow a customer to contact the provider or the manufacturer just as the purchase decision has been made);
- *replacing the touristic product* (it may be said that the brochure is the touristic product itself in the purchase point, especially for new customers);
- *being a proof a purchase and a reference element for future satisfaction* (the guide, the map, the brochure are a substitute of the product even between purchase and consumption; they can be re-read during this entire time in order to stimulate the expectations and hopes of the tourist, who will show them to relatives and friends, thus enhancing the notoriousness of the touristic destination);
- *facilitating the use of the product* (it is only natural for the customer to be equipped with an entire range of printed materials as s/he arrives at the destination, that will inform him/her on the various available services and the methods and conditions to use them, that will show him/her how to best use his/her stay, will show special offers, as well as anything that may be useful or create satisfaction during the stay). The distribution of printed advertising materials when taking part in fairs, festivals and relevant exhibitions will attract tourists to this destination that, in some cases, they may have never heard of.
- *educating customers* (the educative function of printed materials is very important when dealing with a range of attractions such as museums, exhibitions, natural reservations, folkloric festivals, etc.).

Due to the absence of high quality informative and promotional materials, the low promotion of the touristic offer at a national and international level, the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic area has not been very popular among tourists so far.

The first requirement for these materials is to attract the reader's attention, with outstanding graphics, the selection of images, innovative angles of

presentation, the quality and accuracy of the photos accompanying the text, the quality of the paper being just some of the aspects that should be taken into account when creating advertising materials, so that the user may read them.

Certain recommendations shall be taken into account when drawing up printed advertising materials (e.g. guides, maps, brochures, etc. with information and pictures). They match the details of the financing application with the conclusions of the research performed in the elaboration of the Marketing Study.

- The touristic guide gets the reader acquainted with the touristic potential of the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic destination. It should provide catchy information meeting the requirements of memorability (a comprehensible and persuasive message), emotional approach, originality, creativity, harmony of colours and accessibility. The photo album will complete the touristic guide with outstanding photographs, starting from the idea that "an image is worth a thousand words".

- An important element, that should be present in every touristic guide, is a map of touristic sights. The map must visually signal the touristic sights.

- A brochure promoting local tourism and local crafts. It should be drawn up in a most attractive visual manner, with photographs raising the tourists' interest for the sector.

- Touristic promotion films are an efficient method to advertise/promote the Mehedinti-Vidin cross-border area, with a view to attracting as many tourists as possible and inform them on the touristic opportunities provided by the Mehedinti-Vidin area. Films should be created as dynamically as possible, with a strong visual impact, so as to stimulate the tourists' interest to visit the area.

It is recommended to distribute the promotional materials drawn up within the project, free of charge to as many segments of the audience as possible, mostly to tourists, upon participation in fairs, festivals, as well as to bodies involved on the market (e.g. local public administrations, tourist information centres, etc.), for a proper promotion and attraction of as many tourists as possible to the promoted touristic destination.

C) Organisation of informative and awareness-raising events:

The organisation of informative and awareness-raising events is an integral part of the touristic promotion of the Mehedinti-Vidin area. Such events should be organised in the project implementation area, with a view to informing and raising the citizens' awareness, as the decision makers in the 2 areas, i.e. Mehedinti and Vidin, regarding the touristic potential of the area, the homogeneous development and use of the joint natural and cultural values of the area, the natural and cultural heritage of the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic area, so that it may be appreciated at its fair value and preserved for the future.

D). Promotion of joint crafts and traditions

The development of tourism as a business activity is closely related to the souvenirs that manage to convey the emotional experience connected to the envisaged place. The Mehedinti-Vidin touristic area should also be promoted by creating touristic souvenirs. Tourists want to have something that reminds them of the history of the places they have visited, of the landscapes that have impressed them. The development of genuine souvenirs may play an important part in outlining touristic destinations. The development of a market of manually crafted souvenirs will generate revenues for local producers, and the originality of such products may become one of the reasons attracting to visit the touristic area. Due

to the special conditions, characterised by the uniqueness of the landscape, the richness of fauna and a wide heritage of historical symbols, the area may become a unique touristic destination, full of authenticity. All this lies at the basis of building genuine souvenirs, associated to historical heritage, cultural traditions and identity. Starting from the touristic routes proposed in the hereby study, as well as the tourists' preference to visit certain touristic sights in the Mehedinti-Vidin area, we propose for the following to be used for touristic souvenirs:

- The Water Castle (Drobeta Turnu Severin - Mehedinti county) - a representative historical sight of the county capital, Drobeta Turnu Severin
- The Natural Bridge of Ponoarele (Ponoarele - Mehedinti county) - a natural touristic sight, the largest natural bridge in the country and the second in Europe
- Decebal's Statue (Dubova - Mehedinti county) - a natural touristic sight representative for Romania, as the highest stone sculpture in Europe
- The Baba Vida Fortress (Vidin - Vidin district) - a representative historical sight for the town of Vidin
- The Belogradchik Rocks (Belogradchik - Vidin district) - a representative natural sight for Bulgaria
- The Magura Cave (Magura - Vidin district) - a major touristic sight in Bulgaria, unique through its pre-historical cultural value

E). Participation in fairs and exhibitions

The participation in relevant events is an integral part of the touristic promotion of the Mehedinti-Vidin area. Since fairs, exhibitions, festivals take place in various regions of Romania and Bulgaria, with a local, regional and national impact, an increase in the popularity of the promoted sights may be deducted.

Besides the local, regional or national character of these events, we should also remind of their popularity, since they are intensely promoted and they have a large number of visitors, and the high level of dissemination occupies a major place in the promotion of the Mehedinti-Vidin touristic area.

A major advantage of taking part in local/regional/national tourism fairs is that exhibitors have the opportunity to establish new business contacts, to enter new markets and explore new relevant sectors, also benefitting from exposure towards the visitors. Exhibitions respond to the needs of the providers of touristic and related services, as well as customers, intermediating a direct contact with them. Exhibitors may be institutions, associations and companies working in the field of tourism and business, representing associations that promote tourism, tour operators, airlines, travel agents, hotels, spa resorts, agro-touristic hostels, organisations specialised in rural, cultural, ecological, religious tourism, hunting and fishing tourism, business tourism, providers of services and products in related fields.

In order to increase the number of tourists in the Mehedinti - Vidin touristic destination, promotional and informative materials should be made available to visitors when taking part in relevant events at a local and/or regional and/or national level: guides, maps, informative films, the Book of Craftworkers.

When taking part in tourism fairs, the promotion of joint Romanian-Bulgarian traditions should also be undertaken, besides traditional promotional materials. These traditions can be an effective way to promote the touristic area; their promotion may enhance the attractiveness of the area, implicitly the number of tourists in the Mehedinti-Vidin aea.

Conclusions of the chapter

A higher number of Romanian and foreign tourists visiting the Mehedinti-Vidin area can only be achieved, for the moment, by promoting the touristic potential and sights in the area.

The Danube with calm waters or waters that seem to "boil" in uniquely picturesque calcar cuves, as well as its sunny and tempting beaches; the history and culture-fraught towns on the Bulgarian and the Romanian shores of the Danube, such as Vidin, Belogradchik, Drobeta Turnu-Severin; the breath-taking natural landscapes of Belogradchik, Ponoarele or Isverna; the Chuprene Biosphere Reserve and the Garla Mare - Maglavit Protected Natural Area, the Blahnita Protected Natural Area, the Rabisha and Zaton lakes or the Magura and Isverna Caves are the main reasons to visit the Mehedinti-Vidin area.

Therefore, specific actions are recommended in order to promote the following touristic destinations:

1. The "green-blue" touristic area in the Mehedinti county with the following sights: cruise on the Danube, visiting the Tricule Fortress, the "cazane" of the Danube, the Danube Gorges, Decebal's status, the Veterani Cave;

2. The "green-blue" touristic route in the Vidin district, with the following touristic sights: kayak-canoeing on the Danube, visiting the Novo Selo Beach; the Koshava Beach, the Golia Island Beach;

3. "Culture and history in the Mehedinti county", with the following sights: the Drobeta Turnu Severin city (visiting the Water Castle, the Medieval Fortress of Severin and the Theodor Costescu Cultural Palace); the Sf. Ana Monastery; the Strehaia Monastery; museums.

4. "Culture and history in the Vidin district", with the following sights: the town of Vidin (the Baba Vida Fortress, the Mosque of Osman Pazvantoglu, the Koluka Turkish Mansion, the Cross-shaped Barracks, the Synagogue, the Old Turkish Mail Office, the Municipal Theatre of Vidin), Kula Castra Martis, the Novo Selo Church, the Belogradchik Fortress; museums.

5. "Route in the nature of the Mehedinti county", with visits to the following sights: the Karst Complex in Ponoarele (the Natural Bridge of Ponoarele, also called God's Bridge, the Bridge Cave, limestone pavements, the Zaton Lake), the Isverna area - Isverna Cave; the Garla Mare - Maglavit and Blahnita Protected Natural Areas.

6. "Route in the nature of the Vidin district", with visits to the following sights: the mountain formations of Belogradchik; the Chuprene Biosphere Reservation; the Rabisha Lake; the Magura Cave.

For a high impact, promotional action should be taken at a local, regional and national level, both in Romania and Bulgaria. To this purpose, the most popular and accessible sources of information and promotion should be used: advertising materials, internet, media, participation in local and/or regional and/or national tourism fairs in Romania and Bulgaria.

Fairs, exhibitions and festivals represent a highly efficient tool of marketing communication, due to the advantages they offer: the possibility of coming into contact with the demand of touristic offer, of studying its behaviour, studying concurrent offers, contacting the various providers or suppliers of touristic services, promoting and even selling their own products within the event (especially in relevant fairs), etc.

The promotion of the Mehedinti - Vidin touristic destination, through the mentioned specific actions, in Romania and Bulgaria, aims at sustainably developing tourism in this area and might be the driving force resulting in a progressive increase of the interest for the promoted sights.

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Appendix 1

Cultural events in the city of Vidin, in the course of 2016

Event type	Date	Location
Piano classes competition	january	House of culture
Participation of "Fame" Jazz band at St. Valentine concert	february	
R. Bulgaria-national holiday concert	3th of march	Bdintsi Market
8 th of March literature salon	march	House of culture
<i>ADF Tsvyat participation in the Zheglitsa village concert</i>	<i>8th of march</i>	<i>Zheglitsa Village</i>
Annunciation concert with Metropolitan of Vidin	march	Drama Theatre
Daga school participation at the national drawing contest "With my own eyes I have seen the affliction"	april	Vidin
Concert - spectacle of Fame jazz band, Fame junior and Fame Jazz school -dance / 25 years since the establishment of the Jazz school-Dance	april	Drama Theatre
ADF „Tsvyat” Spectacle	april	Drama Theatre
Traditional dances school show for 15 years after the establishment of the school	april	
“FLORII”- Concert	april	Open scene
Participation of Daga school in Coca-Cola Holiday contest	may	Blagoevgrad
Participation of Daga school in „Stories” contest	may	CMC Varna
Concert of schools and troops from Culture house in the 1st of June - International Children's Day	may	Open scene
Day of Slavic writing, Bulgarian Education and Culture	may	Open scene
Concert dedicated to Europe Day	may	
Closing the school year in English schools	may	House of culture
Annual exhibition of drawing for "Daga" School children	june	House of culture
Annual concert of the piano school	june	House of culture
Annual concert of children's art school	june	Open scene
The 9th assembly for authentic folklore "Rhythms of the Danube"	june	Open scene
Opening of the new year of cultural creations from the culture house	october	House of culture Tsvyat
St. Dumitru - spiritual feast of Vidin city - ADF "Tsvyat" participation at shows organized by the City of Vidin	26th of october	Open scene in front of the City Hall
Christian family and Christian youth's Day, along with Metropolitan of Vidin- Discussions with youth Concert	21th of november	House of culture Drama Theatre
The group of singers visiting the city's administrative buildings	december	
Participation of Bădnik group of singers, organized by the City of Vidin	december	
<u>Christmas and New Year celebrations- Art Exhibition for Christmas</u> <u>Literature salon for Christmas</u> <u>Children show for Christmas "stars near the tree"</u>	december	House of culture House of culture Philharmonic

Event type	Date	Location
		hall

Source: House of Culture Tsyat 1870 Vidin City - Cultural Calendar of 2016

Appendix 2

Cultural events in the town of Belogradchik in the course of 2016

Month	Date	Event	Organizator	Location
Ianuarie	01.01.2016	Celebrating sf. Vasile in Karlovits district	CC „Razvitie” Youth House	Youth House
	06.01.2016	Poetic evening celebrating the birth of Hr.Botev	History Museum High School Hr. Botev	CC „Razvitie”
	06.01.2016	Holy Cross for Epiphany removal ritual from Stakevska river	Belogradchik, CC „Razvitie” City	Goren Chiflik Village
February	01. 02. 2016 /14.02.2016/	Feast Day winegrower "Real wine is bitter"	.Belogradchik, CC „Razvitie” City Children complex Youth house	Centrală market
	February 2016	Official feast of Vasil Levski Primary School	Vasil Levski CC „Razvitie” Primary school Chilcren complex History Museum	CC „Razvitie”
	The third decade of the month	138 years since the release of Belogradchik / 25th of February / conferences under the title: "I took part in Holy War"	History Museum	Hristo Botev Youth house
	19.02.2016	Day of Bulgarian archeology	History Museum	History Museum
	February - march 2016	Exploitation of inland waters for cataloging, counting and fotoshooting waterbirds.	History Museum	Water tanks
March	01.03.2016	Popular Traditions celebration dedicated to Baba Marta	Children complexul, CC „Razvitie”	On the city streets
	03.03.2016	Liberation of Bulgaria - Celebrating National Day of R.Bulgaria - 3rd of March	Belogradchik City, Youth house,Children complex, CC „Razvitie”,History Museum	Youth House
	08. 03.2016	Celebrating International Women's Day on the 8th of March under the motto "Let me be heard, let me be seen, I'm coming"	Children complex, CC„Razvitie”,Histo ry Museum	Youth House
	19.03.2016	Sf. Tudor- horse racing	Belogradchik CC „Razvitie” Salash City Hall	Salash City Hall Belogradchik City Hall
	March-april 2016	Pigeons exhibition	History Museum	Atr gallery
	Early april	Forest's week	Belogradchik City History Museum	Youth house

Month	Date	Event	Organizator	Location
April	08.04. 2016	Opening of the new tourist season	Belogradchik City, Youth house, Children complex, CC „Razvitie”	Central square
	22.04.2016	Eco art concert dedicated to the Earth's day	Belogradchik City, Youth house, Children complex, CC „Razvitie”	Youth house
	Great Thursday 28.04.2016.	Essays presenting at municipal radio "Easter, everything is colorful"	History Museum	Municipal Radio
May	01.05.2016	Organizing Easter	Belogradchik City, Youth house, Children complex, CC „Razvitie”	Central Square
	06.05.2016	Sf. Gheorghe Holiday	Belogradchik City, CC „Razvitie”	Central Square
	09.05.2016	Celebrating Europe Day and Victory Day	Belogradchik City, CC „Razvitie”	Central Square
	17.05.2016	Sports day	Belogradchik City, Schools	Central Square Youth house
	The second decade of May	International Museum Day - visits by children from "Vasil Levski" primary school at the History Museum - topic, "I remember."	History Museum	History Museum
	24.05.2016	Day of Slavic Writing and Bulgarian culture	Belogradchik City, Youth house, Children complex, CC „Razvitie”, Schools	Central Square
	30.05.2016	Celebrating 166 years from revolt in Belogradchik in 1850	Belogradchik City, CC „Razvitie” History Museum, Schools	Belogradchik Citadel
	May - June, 2016	Expoziții ale elevilor din Școala de artă în cadrul Centrului de muncă cu copiii	History Museum Complexul copiilor	Galeria de artă
	01.06. 2016	Concert dedicated to the child's day	Belogradchik City, Children complex	Central Square
	25.06.2016	Tețka Nesheva Exhibition - painting	History Museum	Art Gallery

Month	Date	Event	Organizator	Location
June	25-29.06.2016	"St Peter" at - Day of Belogradchik city, The traditional fair	Belogradchik City, Youth house, Children complex, CC „Razvitie”	„Panairishte”
	25th of June 2016	Traditional Festival ”from Timok to Iskar”	Ministry of Culture, District Administration, Belogradchik City, Youth house, Children complex, CC „Razvitie” Institute of Music	„Panairishte”
July	01.07.2016	2016 archaeological season opener	History Museum	History Museum
	22 - 24.07.2016	International Assembly for passage the Kadaboaz road Salash village- Novo korito Village, penultimate Saturday and Sunday of July	Belogradchik City, Kneazhevtsi City Hall, Cultural Institutes	„Kadaboaz”
August	06.08.2016	Rabisha village feast traditional Assembly	Belogradchik City CC „Napredak”	Rabisha Village
	August-september 2016	Nikolai Penkov Drawing Exhibition	History Museum	Art Galley
	The third Saturday of August	Feast of the forest and tourism in Stakevski Balkan	Belogradchik City, CC „Kr. Bachvarov” Stakevtsi Village, CC „Razvitie”	„Bela Voda”
September	06.09.2016	131 years since the Unification Day	CC „Razvitie” Belogradchik City, Youth house, Children complex, History Museum	Central Square
	15.09.2016	Opening of new school year	Belogradchik City, Schools	Schools
	22.09.2016	The independence Day of R. Bulgaria	CC „Razvitie” Belogradchik City, Youth house, Children complex, History Museum	Central Square
October	03.10.2016	Poetic Observatory	Belogradchik City, CC „Razvitie” 1893, Children complex	Astronomy Observatory
	14.10.2016	Presenting the results of archaeological summer 2016	History Museum	Museum

Month	Date	Event	Organizator	Location
	October-nvember. 2016	Dimitar Vetsin Drawing Exhibition	History Museum	Art Gallery
November	01.11.2016	National leaders day	CC „Razvitie” Youth house, Children complex, History Museum, Schools	Youth house
	21.11.2016	Celebrating Christian Family	Youth house, Children complex	Youth house
December	09 - 31.12. 2016	Holidays for Christmas and New Year	Belogradchik City Cultural Insitutes	Youth house CC „Razvitie” Central Square

Sursa: Туристически Информационен Център
 Tourist Information Centre
 Municipality of Belogradchik
 1 A, Poruchik Dvorianov Str., BG-3900 Belogradchik
 mailto:tourism@belogradchik.bg
<http://www.belogradchik.bg>

Appendix 3

Vidin district by population censuses in 2001 and 2011

Municipality	Population 2001	% of the district population 2001	Population 2011	% of the district population 2011	Population trends
Belogradchik	8.217	6,3	6.602	6,5	-1.615
Boinitza	2.270	1,7	1.341	1,3	-929
Bregovo	7.515	5,8	5.514	5,5	-2.001
Vidin	77.500	59,6	63.257	62,6	-14.243
Gramada	3.196	2,5	2.007	2,0	-1.189
Dimovo	8.783	6,8	6.514	6,4	-2.269
Kula	6.792	5,2	4.717	4,7	-2.075
Makresh	2.550	2,0	1.630	1,6	-920
Ruzhnitsi	6.061	4,7	4.374	4,3	-1.687
Novo Selo	4.206	3,2	2.979	2,9	-1.227
Ciuprene	3.004	2,3	2.083	2,1	-921
Distr. Vidin	130.094	-	101 018	-	-29 076

Source: Vidin District Development Strategy 2014-2020, pg.129-133

Appendix 4

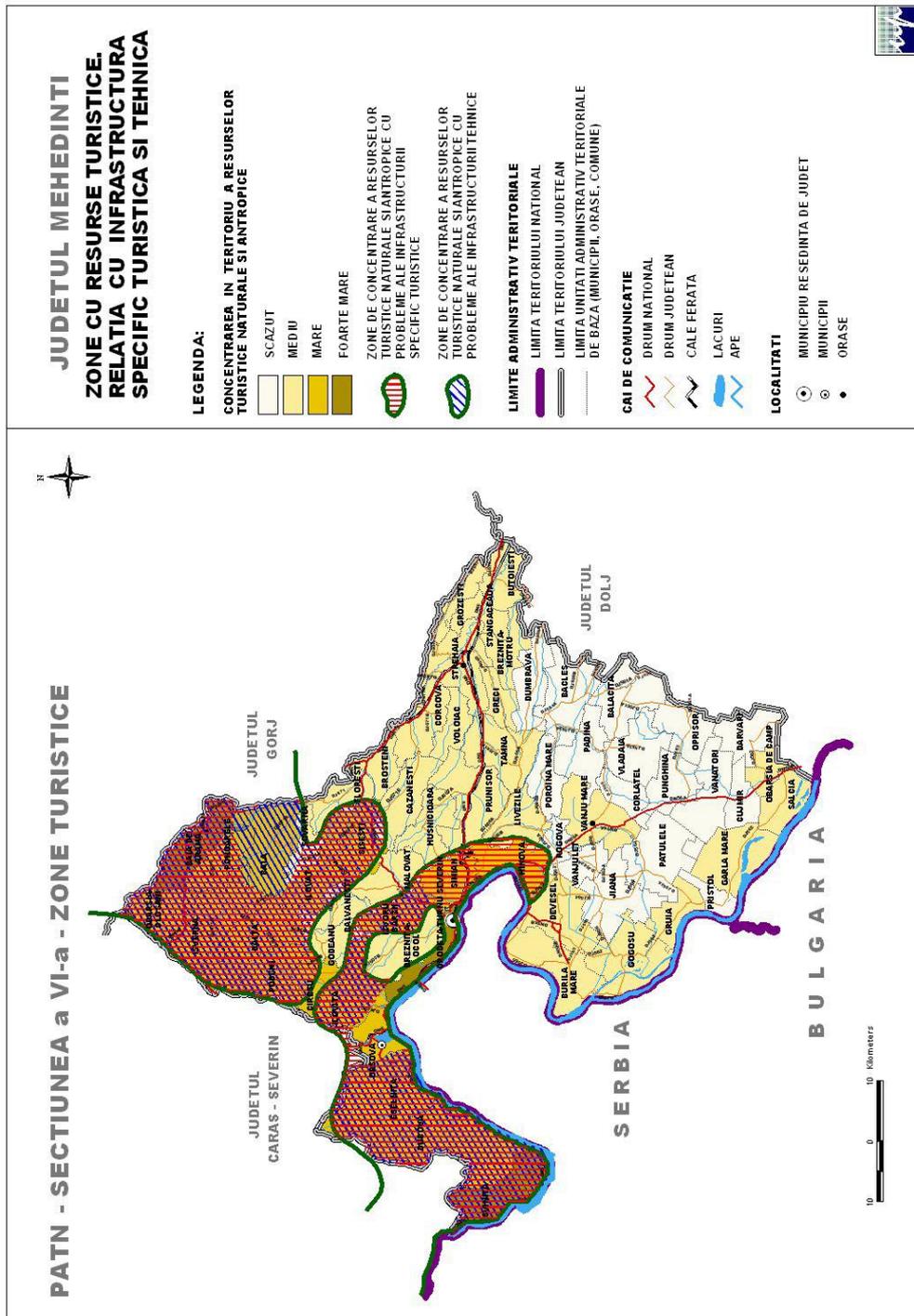
List of licensed travel agencies in Mehedinti county

Agency name	Adress Agency	Economic Operator	Locality	SITE WEB
A & S TRAVELLERS	BD. T. VLADIMIRESCU 68B	SC A & S TRAVELLERS SRL	DR.TURNU-SEVERIN	
AVA TRAVEL	STR.TRAIAN, NR.85, CORP B, BL.C1	SC AVA TRAVEL 2015 SRL-D	DR.TURNU-SEVERIN	www.avatravel.ro
BIROUL DE TURISM DROBETA	STR. I. G. BIBICESCU, NR. 4, ET 1, AP.3	SC BIROUL DE TURISM DROBETA SR	DR.TURNU-SEVERIN	
CLASS TOUR	STR.KISELEFF, NR 68, BL KA6, SC.3, AP 1	SC ERO IMPEX SRL	DR.TURNU-SEVERIN	
CORTINA TRAVEL	STR ORLY, NR 9	SC SENZA PAURA SRL	DR.TURNU-SEVERIN	
DANUBIUS TOUR	P-TA BAZINULUI, NR.3	SC BUCOVINA PROD COM SRL	DR.TURNU-SEVERIN	www.danubiustour.com
DROBETA	BD CAROL I, NR 2	SC SIND DROBETA SRL	DR.TURNU-SEVERIN	
EDUTOUR	STR TRAIAN, NR 129	SC EDUTOUR SRL	DR .TURNU-SEVERIN	-
FILADELFIA	STR CALOMFIRESCU, NR 283, BL B7, AP 1	SC FILADELFIA SRL	DR.TURNU-SEVERIN	www.filadelfiaturism.ro
HERCULES TOUR	STR HORIA, NR 12, CENTRUL COM DECEBAL, PARTER	SC HERCULES GROUP SERVICES SRL	DR.TURNU-SEVERIN	
MAGIROM TOUR	ORAS BAIA DE ARAMA, NR 287	MAGIC TRAVEL TOUR SRL	MARASESTI	
MILLENNIUM TOUR	BD REVOLUTIEI 1989, NR 17, BL F4, SC A, AP 1	SC EMMA HARTE SRL	DR.TURNU-SEVERIN	www.milleniuntour-drobeta.ro
PHEONIX TRAVEL	STR CRISAN, NR 17B	SC PHEONIX CLARIMA TRAVEL SRL-D	DR.TURNU-SEVERIN	www.pheonixtravel.ro
ROYAL YON VACANCY	STR CICERO, NR 30	SC ROYAL YON VACANCY SRL	DR.TURNU-SEVERIN	
SAGITARIO TRAVEL	CENTRUL CIVIC, NR. 1	SC SAGITARIO TRAVEL SRL	ORSOVA	www.sagitariottravel.ro
SEVERIN TOUR	STR CRISAN, NR 19	SC MAGIC MOMENTS SRL	DR.TURNU-SEVERIN	www.severintour.ro
TOUR PARADIS	STR GHEORGHE ANGHEL, NR 78	SC TOUR PARADIS CONSULTING SRL	DR.TURNU-SEVERIN	
TOURING EUROPABUS	BD.T.VLADIMIRESCU, NR.78, PARTER	SC TOURING EUROPABUS ROMANIA SRL	DR.TURNU-SEVERIN	www.eurolines.ro

Source: Database of the National Tourism Authority (updated 14/04/2016), <http://turism.gov.ro/informatii-publice/>

Appendix 5

The relationship between natural and anthropogenic tourist resources and tourist and technical infrastructure



Source: Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, the national land plan, section VI - touristic areas, <http://www.mdr.ro/studii-de-fundamentare-privind-patn-sectiunea-a-vi-a-zone-cu-resurse-turistice>

Appendix 6

The evolution of the population in Mehedinti, by age and sex

Ages and age groups	Sexes	Residential areas	Years		
			Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014
0- 4 Years	male	Urban	2812	2721	2653
-	-	Rural	3361	3194	3001
-	female	Urban	2666	2570	2497
-	-	Rural	3211	3106	3001
5- 9 Years	male	Urban	3055	3021	2979
-	-	Rural	3836	3751	3660
-	female	Urban	2872	2862	2841
-	-	Rural	3553	3428	3361
10-14 Years	male	Urban	3141	3032	2974
-	-	Rural	4290	4218	4169
-	female	Urban	3028	2940	2877
-	-	Rural	3936	3891	3824
15-19 Years	male	Urban	3610	3554	3436
-	-	Rural	4203	4233	4213
-	female	Urban	3315	3294	3232
-	-	Rural	3854	3900	3904
20-24 Years	male	Urban	3572	3359	3282
-	-	Rural	4148	4094	4030
-	female	Urban	3247	3017	2979
-	-	Rural	3377	3216	3205
25-29 Years	male	Urban	3839	3780	3717
-	-	Rural	3759	3907	3995
-	female	Urban	3753	3592	3398
-	-	Rural	3265	3298	3244
30-34 Years	male	Urban	4533	4196	3928
-	-	Rural	4327	4186	3980
-	female	Urban	4706	4344	4024
-	-	Rural	4078	3844	3594
35-39 Years	male	Urban	5241	5231	5120
-	-	Rural	5132	5119	4999
-	female	Urban	5347	5364	5331
-	-	Rural	4453	4474	4419
40-44 Years	male	Urban	6081	5546	5230
-	-	Rural	5953	5710	5440
-	female	Urban	6426	5856	5480
-	-	Rural	4887	4697	4521
45-49 Years	male	Urban	4216	4793	5307

Ages and age groups	Sexes	Residential areas	Years		
			Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014
-	-	Rural	4002	4564	5122
-	female	Urban	4475	5062	5596
-	-	Rural	3094	3572	4029
50-54 Years	male	Urban	4945	4649	4399
-	-	Rural	4392	4292	4116
-	female	Urban	5132	4823	4573
-	-	Rural	3702	3497	3250
55-59 Years	male	Urban	4982	5026	5005
-	-	Rural	4453	4546	4486
-	female	Urban	5207	5292	5316
-	-	Rural	4689	4616	4392
60-64 Years	male	Urban	3551	3645	3820
-	-	Rural	4850	4668	4385
-	female	Urban	4063	4138	4254
-	-	Rural	5575	5391	5094
65-69 Years	male	Urban	2011	2186	2443
-	-	Rural	3899	4103	4269
-	female	Urban	2400	2661	3004
-	-	Rural	4811	5013	5196
70-74 Years	male	Urban	1552	1440	1434
-	-	Rural	3600	3379	3223
-	female	Urban	2148	2044	1963
-	-	Rural	5181	4761	4480
75-79 Years	male	Urban	1195	1217	1212
-	-	Rural	3105	3116	3079
-	female	Urban	1844	1845	1884
-	-	Rural	4892	4943	4924
80-84 Years	male	Urban	609	621	638
-	-	Rural	1789	1826	1849
-	female	Urban	1185	1226	1251
-	-	Rural	2893	2934	3026
85 Years and over	male	Urban	336	349	349
-	-	Rural	950	1018	1078
-	female	Urban	722	766	804
-	-	Rural	1744	1821	1870

Source: NIS database tempo online resident population by age, sex, area of residence, macroregions, development regions and counties at 1st of July

Appendix 7

List of tourism accommodation structures classified in Mehedinti county
(31.12.2012)

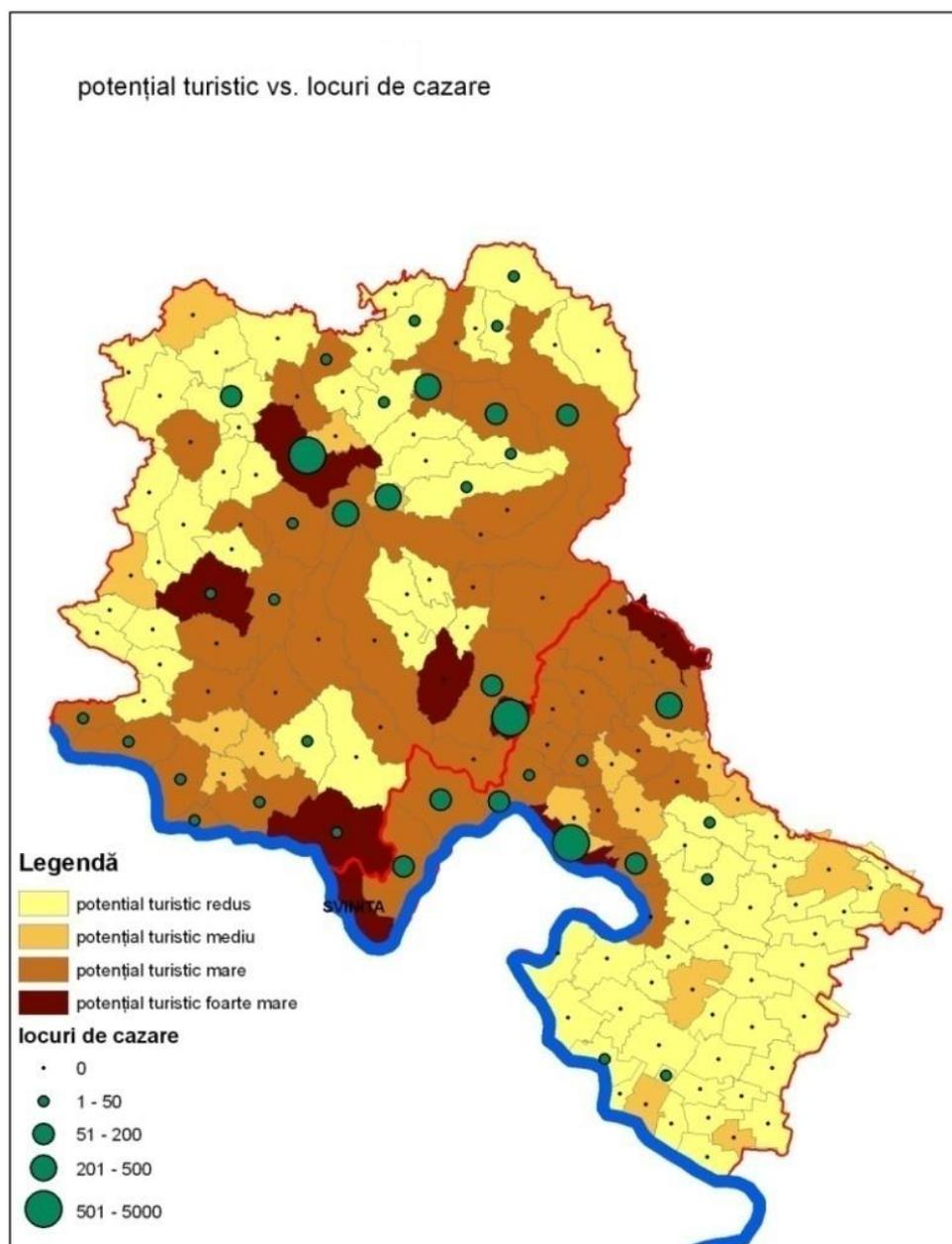
Name unit	Unit type	Nr. seats	Category
Drobeta Turnu Severin			
AAS	pension	29	2 stars
ADA	hostel	16	3 stars
AMBIENT	pension	16	3 stars
ANDRA	pension	37	3 stars
BELVEDERE	pension	30	3 stars
BULEVARD	hotel	48	3 stars
CLIPA	hotel	29	3 stars
CLUB G	hotel	76	4 stars
CONTINENTAL	motel	74	3 stars
CONTINENTAL	hotel	230	3 stars
EUROPA	pension	16	3 stars
FLORA	hotel	64	3 stars
HIP	hostel	26	1 stars
MIRAJ	pension	16	3 stars
MIRCEA	pension	23	3 stars
MON CHERI	pension	10	3 stars
PETROM	hotel	46	3 stars
SEVERIN	hotel	36	2 stars
TINERETULUI	hostel	45	2 stars
TRAIAN	hotel	183	2 stars
TUDOR	hotel	52	3 stars
YAKY DROBETA	hostel	146	3 stars
TOTAL Drobeta Turnu Severin		1248	
Baia de Aramă			
IZVORUL RECE	hostel	43	3 stars
TOTAL Baia de Aramă		43	
Bala			
CERES	hotel	208	2 ste
TOTAL Bala		208	
Dubova			
DECEBAL	pension	30	4 flori
DELFINUL	tourist cottage	10	3 stele
DUBOVA	rooms for rent	6	2 stele
HERCULES	pension	6	2 stele
MELBA	pension	20	4 stele
TOTAL Dubova		72	
Eselnita			
ANA SERENA	pension	4	2 stele
CASA CU SMOCHINI	rooms for rent	16	3 stele
DANUBIA	pension	15	3 flori
DOINA	pension	11	3 flori
IOVANOVICI ELISABETA-MYLE	pension	8	2 flori
IULIA	pension	8	2 flori
LA PONTON	pension	24	3 stele
MARIA	pension	8	3 stele

MRACONIA	pension	20	3 flori
SEPTEMBRIE	pension	20	4 stele
SEPTEMBRIE	pension	20	4 stele
STEAUA DUNARII	pension	28	3 flori
TRANSENE	pension	16	3 stele
YUPPY	pension	13	3 stele
TOTAL Eselnita		211	
Gruia			
GRUIA	Agrotourism pension	18	3 flori
TOTAL Gruia		18	
Hinova			
SAN&GINO	pension	6	2 stele
TOTAL Hinova		6	
Ilovita			
MARIA (Ilovița)	pension	10	2 stele
MARIA (Bahna)	pension	8	2 flori
TOTAL Ilovita		18	
Simian			
CAMBERA	pension	24	3 stele
SMILE	pension	20	3 stele
TOTAL Simian		44	
Orsova			
DAMIRO	pension	23	3 stele
MANEA	hostel	14	3 stele
MERIDIAN	hotel	44	3 stele
OLIVER	pension	20	4 stele
TAKA	pension	16	3 stele
TOTAL Orsova		117	
TOTAL GENERAL		1985	

Source: database of Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration (<http://www.mdrap.ro/turism/unitati-clasificate>)

Appendix 8

Distribuția locurilor de cazare în județul Mehedinți



Appendix 9

List of tourism accommodation structures classified in the district of Vidin
(12.12.2011)

MUNICIPALITY	STYLE	NAME	CATEGORY (Stars)	ADRESS
Belogradchik	Rooms	RAI	1	Str Tsar Ivan Sratsimir 3
Belogradchik	Rooms	PRI NEVENA	1	Str Hr. Botev 16
Belogradchik	Villa	DJUN	2	Mun Belogradchik
Belogradchik	Rooms	PRI SASHO	1	Str Poruchik Dvoryanov 27 B
Belogradchik	House	ALBASITA	1	Near Astronomic Observator
Belogradchik	House	MADONA	2	Str .Hr.Botev 36
Belogradchik	House	ALECS	2	Mun Belogradchik
Belogradchik	House	POD LIPITE	1	Area Markashnitsa"
Belogradchik	House	UEST HAUSC	1	Str Poruchik Dvoryanov 29 A
Belogradchik	House	GENCHEVI	1	Str V.Levski 8
Belogradchik	House	ZORA	2	Str Haidut Belko 2
Belogradchik	House	BEDROK	1	Str Hadji Dimitar 13
Belogradchik	House	PRIMAVERA	1	Str Petko Kazandji 9
Belogradchik	Rooms	KAM ROKS	1	Str Otets Paisi 1
Belogradchik	House	ARTES	1	Str Polkovnik Kantili 6
Belogradchik	House	DO DABA	1	Mun Belogradchik
Belogradchik	House	INI	1	Str Tsar Asen I 6
Belogradchik	House	DRAKITE	1	Str Treti Mart 37
Belogradchik	House	"CASTLE COTTAGE"	2	Str Tsolo Todorov 36
Belogradchik	Housing	KAM ROKS	1	G. Benkovski 3 Square
Belogradchik	Rooms	PRI VANYA	1	Str Hr. Botev 3
Belogradchik	Rooms	GERIKA	1	Str Petko Kovacha 2
Belogradchik	House	EGO	2	Str Treti mart 14
Belogradchik	Hotel	DALIA	2	Bld Saedinenie 1
Belogradchik	House	VILA MADJAROVI	1	Vilna zona Markashnitsa
Belogradchik	House	MARINATA KASHTA	1	
Belogradchik	House	"BERCHINATA KASHTA "	1	
Belogradchik	House	"METERIZ"	2	Vilna Zona
Belogradchik	House	"NEZABRAVKA"	1	
Belogradchik	House	"MARKASHNITSA"	1	Villa Area "Markashnitsa "
Belogradchik	Housing	"MIDZHUR"	1	Str. Stara planina " 8 sc.A et. 4
Belogradchik	Villa	" RAZSADNIKA "	1	Razsadnika "Selishta"
Belogradchik	House	"SKALOLAZKA"	2	str. "Poruchik Cholakov" 13
Belogradchik	Rooms	VIKO	1	Str. "Kneaz Aleksandar Batenberg

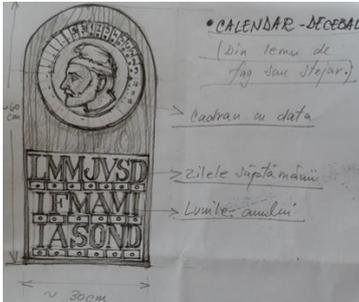
MUNICIPALITY	STYLE	NAME	CATEGORY (Stars)	ADRESS
				" 21
Belogradchik	Rooms	VIKO HODTEL	2	Str."Tsar Ivan Sratsimir" 5
Belogradchik	Rooms Rooms	BEALATA CERNITSA	1	Str. "Kapitan Krastio " 6
Belogradchik	Rooms	FAMILIA BAKALEEVI	1	Str. Peio Yavorov 15
Belogradchik	Rooms	"TEMENUGA"	1	str "Midzhur" 8
Belogradchik	casa	DJAEA	2	str. "Peio Yavorov 12
Belogradchik	Rooms	SKALNA LEGENDA	1	Sat Izvos
Belogradchik	Rooms	PRI TEDI	1	Str. Stara Planina 2 sc.A et.4 ap.12
Belogradchik	Rooms	RABISHA	1	str. "Peta" 24
Belogradchik	Rooms	"GETTO	2	Str."Treti mart" 47
Belogradchik	Rooms	DVATA KIPARISA	1	Str. "Kneaz Aleksandar Batenberg " 3
Belogradchik	camping	"MADONNA"	1	Belogradchik
Belogradchik	Rooms	"DUBRAVIEA	1	mun. Belogradchik
Belogradchik	House	"RELAX"	1	mun. Belogradchik
Belogradchik	Rooms	"BEL VIU"	1	str. Vasil Levski 1 sc.B et.3
Belogradchik	House	GORSKI KAT	1	Sat Granitovo
Belogradchik	Rooms	"POLI"	1	str. „Peta” № 8
Belogradchik	House	"ANINATA KASHTA"	1	Stakevtsi
Vidin	Pension	TANGRA	3	Str, Tsar Aleksandar II, №89A
Vidin	House		2	UPI XXII-123, kartier.12
Vidin	Hotel	DNA	1	Str. Baba Vida 15
Vidin	Pension	CHOLAKIS	2	Str. G Dimitrov, 1A
Vidin	Pension	MERKURII	2	COMPLEX "KR.BACHVAROV", neighborhood.5
Vidin	Hotel	BONONIA	1	Str. Bdin, 2
Vidin	HOTEL	AVRAMOV	3	Str, Tsar Aleksandar II, 63
Vidin	Pension	DILIJANS	3	zona "Malkiq Cheir СИПЗ
Vidin	Pension	ZORA	3	str.Naicho Tsanov, 3A
Vidin	Pension	STARIA GRAD	3	Str.Kneaz Boris I 2
Vidin	Hotel	DUNAV	1	Str. Edelvais 3
Vidin	Pension	IOANNA	3	Bld Panonia, 64
Vidin	Pension	VIDIN	3	0887/942816
Vidin	Pension	ZORA 2	3	str.Gora zd, 2
Vidin	Pension	VIVAL	1	Str. Al.H. Spasov, 20
Vidin	Pension	VIDIN	3	Str Kneaz Dondukov, 15
Vidin	Hotel	DNA	1	Str. Baba vida, 15
Vidin	Pension	TANGRA	3	Str, Tsar Aleksandar II, 89

MUNICIPALITY	STYLE	NAME	CATEGORY (Stars)	ADRESS
Vidin	Pension	MERKURII 2000	2	Complex Kr. Bachvarov, кв.5
Vidin	House	PALOMA	1	Str.Ribarska", 8
Vidin	House	STARITE BOROVE	1	
Vidin	Pension	STARIA GRAD	3	Str.Kneaz Boris I", 2
Domovo	Housing	COMPLEX DE MOTELE CU 5 CABANE	1	Area . Skeleto
Domovo	Accomodation	Pensiunea „Madona”	2	Mahala Falkovets
Domovo	Accomodation	Camping „Madona”	1	Mahala Falkovets
Domovo	Accomodation	Casa 1	1	
Domovo	Accomodation	Casa 2	1	
Domovo	Accomodation	Casa 3	1	

Source: database official tourism portal in Bulgaria,
http://bulgariatravel.org/en/dynamic_page/125
 and Register of accommodation, catering and entertainment,
<http://ntr.tourism.government.bg/>
 Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Bulgaria, <http://www.tourism.government.bg/>

Appendix 10

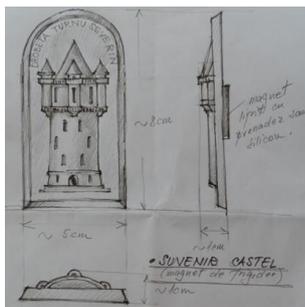
Touristic souvenirs - models



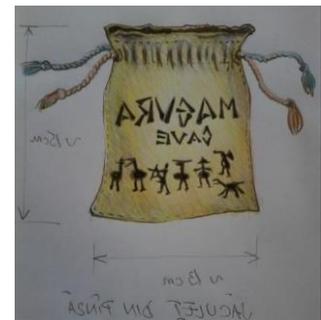
Decebal's Statue
Mehedinti



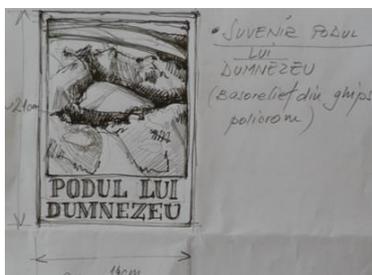
The Baba Vida Fortress
Vidin



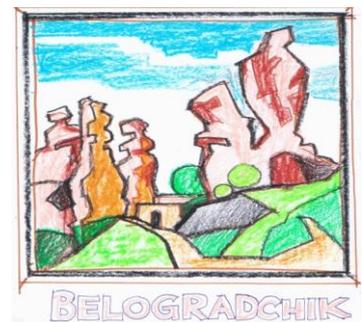
The Water Castle
Mehedinti



The Magura Cave
Vidin



The Natural Bridge of Ponoarele
Mehedinti



The Belogradchik Rocks
Vidin

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. The tourists who use your services opt for:
 - stay (spend in the Mehedinti / Vidin a period of their holiday)
 - traffic tourism (moving successively into several tourist centers/ places)
 - transit (crossing the region to reach destination)

2. What is the reason for the visit of the tourist area Mehedinti / Vidin of the tourists who use your services?
 - leisure and rest
 - entertainment
 - scientific and ecological
 - visiting friends and relatives in the area
 - business

3. The tourist who use your services are travelling in Mehedinti / Vidin by:
 - pedestrian
 - train
 - vehicles
 - bikes
 - others:

4. Tourists prefer to visit the area Mehedinti / Vidin because:
 - reputation of the area
 - area`s tourism potential
 - socio-economic life of the area
 - specific of the area
 - locals` hospitality

5. What percentage of your tourists whose average duration of visit in Mehedinti / Vidin is of:
 - 1 day
 - 2 - 3 day
 - 4 - 7 day
 - over 7 day

6. Indicate the sights (natural, anthropic, cultural, folklore and festivals) that the tourists want to visit in Mehedinti/Vidin:
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -

7. How important is for you to promote Mehedinti / Vidin tourism area:
 - unimportant
 - important
 - very important

8. Score from 1 to 8 the tourist information sources needed to promote the tourism area, according to the degree of trust (1: minimum trust, 8: maximum trust):
- the press
 - travel agencies
 - internet
 - radio / tv
 - promotional materials
 - tourism fairs / exhibitions
9. What percentage of the tourists (who use your services) whose family situation is:
- married:
 - unmarried:
10. What percentage of the tourists (who use your services) whose age is:
- 18-25 years
 - 26-40 years
 - over 40 years
11. What percentage of the tourists (who use your services) whose gender is:
- female:
 - male:
12. If you agree, please leave your contact details:
- Tour-operator.....
 -
 - Locality.....
 -
 - Name.....

Thank you!



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GOVERNMENT OF ROMANIA



GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



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