

Interreg



Greece-Bulgaria BORDERLESS CULTURE

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Project “Integrating Bulgaria-Greece cross-border significance historical and archeological assets into one sustainable thematic tourist destination”

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BORDERLESS CULTURE



Handbook of good practices

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Handbook of good practices

*Research and exchange of good practices,
existing in the cross-border area, related to
the restoration, promotion and management of
cultural-historical and archeological assets*

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1. Introduction – analysis of the situation

Nowadays the expectations of change in the urban areas are associated with socio-cultural and economical dynamics in the societies. Every territorial area begins to literally "fight" for attention and focus on the global scene, which is full of not a few imitations, fading values and unpopularized cultural-historical sites and respectively the community commensuration in different aspects.

„*Borderless Culture*“ is getting increasingly popular today and turns into an essential tool for sharing good practices, sharing cultural, historical, archeological and natural heritage in the cross-border areas. Obviously the basic content of the communication nowadays, in discursive context from the type “Hi, where are you?”¹, shows that the spaces (city/village) have to aesthetize, to identify clearly their differences, so that there is a *tight and different content*.

The digital revolution in the cultural policy has already provided many new opportunities and directions; it multiplies the tendencies of increasing in the number of regional projects and platforms, through which new groups of tourists and audiences are being attracted, and so the local economies become stabilized. This leads to educating the society into attitude toward the valuable of the regional, local culture, toward the heritage like a factor, which determinates the ethnicity. The mass self-aestheticization and overexposure in cultural projects in the cities should be taken into consideration not only in the perspective of the tourism, new media or the campaign for attracting new investors and experts in managing the cultural industries – it participates in the new economy, in the appearance of the identities of the societies, it sets models and educates.

For the sustainable development of every urban environment, it is important to apply clear cultural and tourism policies, which synchronize with the regional economies, with the potential and possibilities for upgrade and development of the existing cultural centers, institutions and monuments and to contribute for improvement of people’s lives.

The main global tendencies, which should be taken into account when planning and programming of regional cultural politics, are generally directed towards:

- Increasing demand and intensifying of the interest towards destinations for rural, ethnographic-folklore, religious (pilgrimage), gastronomic (vinous or another alcoholic), sports, cultural-historical tourism;
- Innovative way of promoting (also with new technologies) of regional cultural products, as well as unified cultural-historical brands;
- Preparing and developing of tourist’s attractions with marked cultural-historical elements as a complex with all attributes needed by the visitors, as well as interesting resting-places, cozy places for eating, souvenirs’ shops and other places for entertainment;
- Developing of proactive marketing and PR strategies and campaigns; developing of targeted communicating canals for cultural objects in a certain area and attracting different audiences;

¹This is what the postcards did at the end of the 19th century as a communicational phenomenon – they were like an intimate touch between the people and the communities, the long romantic speeches in the letters were replaced by the fabric of a picture, which was bought from the first kiosk. Nowadays this effect is reached by the digital image and the mobility, by the dynamics and tools of the new technologies. Because everybody has those moments – “Click: here I am, at this unique and new place!” – An

- Purposeful developed and thematised social networks, working with specialized Internet media, forums and portals;
- Possibilities of integration of cultural institutes and centers in the so called cultural clusters/associations with the goal of achieving a more stabilized positioning by applying/participation and realization of large international projects and programs;
- Activation of the interaction between the different participants in the tourism's sphere – private sector/tourist's field, sports and cultural organizations and associations, mobile operators, local authorities, non-governmental and academic sector, media etc;
- Promoting of social entrepreneurship and social-integrational policies in the direction of cultural-historical and archeological tourism;
- Activation of the public-private partnership instruments in order to provide new funding opportunities for key sites, which are part of the cultural-historical heritage in the cross-border area.

The opportunities for socialization of the historical and archaeological assets and sites in a sustainable tourist destination, as well as the transformation of this cultural potential into a real "historical and cultural platform for dialogue between the communities" are the subject of this study. Through a wide range of cultural projects the development of the tourist industry in the Southwestern region of Bulgaria could be and is contributed, namely through the cultural-historical heritage and its socialization in the Blagoevgrad Province.²

The concentration of young dynamic people, who are studying at universities in Blagoevgrad, is a capital for the development of successful cultural, educational and integrational policies, with the opportunities of applying new technologies in the cultural industries, as well as the activation of socioeconomic entrepreneurship in the region.³

View towards the city center of Blagoevgrad.



²An increase in the number of overnight accommodations has been registered in the last three years in the Blagoevgrad Province – respectively with 31% realized overnight accommodations in hotels and 23.1% from the income of overnight stays. See: *Regional Plan for the Development of the South West Planning Region in the period 2014-2020*, p.32

³More detailed in the *Regional Plan for the Development of the South West Planning Region in the period 2014-2020*, p.26

2. Good practices from the cross-border area

2.1. Short review of the cultural picture in Blagoevgrad

In the last five years in Blagoevgrad can be noticed some kind of cultural and tourist's activation, the so called "revolutionization" of the festival culture and a revival of cultural sites and institutes with new ideas and potential.

The key factors that stay behind the realized large-scale national and international projects, which have attracted new and diverse audiences and helped to embolden the medium and small businesses in the region, are the following:

- A clear and workable management strategy for the development of the region by rational utilization of the potential of the cultural products in Blagoevgrad - this contributes to strengthening the local economy and to the formation of aesthetics, increasing in the educational level of the people;
- professional teams for realization of specific cultural policies/projects, teams, which achieve balance in the art management and deliver good results;



- active interaction and partnership with non-governmental organizations, with educational and research institutions – institutions of higher education in Blagoevgrad and research centers - achievement of progress in the community;



- differentiated approach and targeted practices in order to attract new national and international partnerships;
- Creative models for the development of new public cultural and socio-cultural spaces;
- Cultural and regional centers, which have been upgraded with new content and in a new management way.

The management of the public sources leads to the emergence of new cultural events, which strengthen the local economy and improve, "refresh" the climate in the city.



There are five key festivals in the cultural calendar of Blagoevgrad, which have been added to the regional cultural program and every year they are further developed and enriched.

These are:

- ✚ The festival for modern French music **FRANCOFOLIES BLAGOEVGRAD**, which was renewed in 2015 after nearly 20 years' break and was turned into a true emblem of the city; world-wide famous stars were attracted, national awards were won and the image of the city and the entire Southwest region was enhanced⁴.

⁴More details about the **FRANCOFOLIES** festival: <https://viewblagoevgrad.com/obekti/francofolies-blagoevgrad/>

View towards the stage of the festival FRANCOFOLIES BLAGOEVGRAD. The festival is included in the list of the 100 most famous francophone events in the whole world.



- ✚ The festival “TARA-RA-BUMBIYA” – a festival platform for independent and young theater⁵.
- ✚ The festival „TALANTINO”- child’s theatre festival⁶.
- ✚ The festival „SOURVAKAR’S GAMES“⁷.
- ✚ The festival „Blagoevgrad BLUES & JAZZ”⁸

The image of Blagoevgrad BLUES&JAZZ 2019



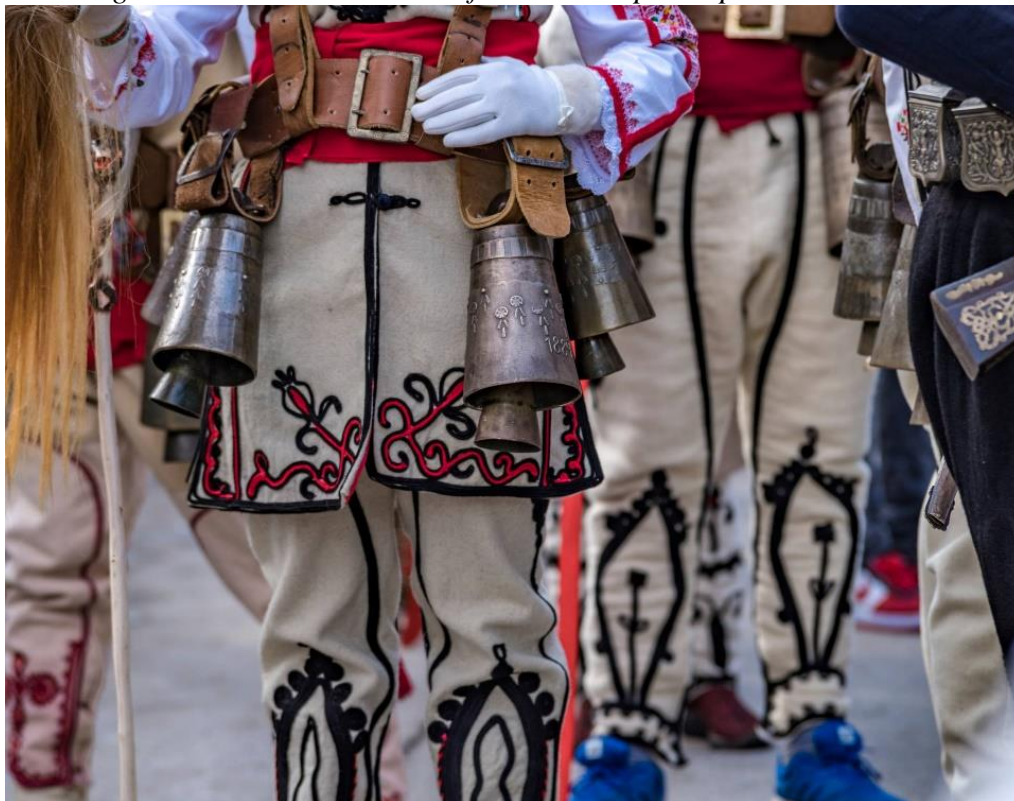
⁵About the theatre festival “TARA-RA-BUMBIYA” - <https://viewblagoevgrad.com/obekti/teatralen-festival-tara-ra-bumbiya/>

⁶About the festival „TALANTINO” - <https://viewblagoevgrad.com/obekti/talantino/>

⁷The festival „SOURVAKAR’S GAMES“ is a unique yearly folklore festival, which gathers together over 1200 mummies in the beginning of every year in January. See: <https://viewblagoevgrad.com/obekti/festival-na-survakarskite-igri/>

⁸The festival „Blagoevgrad BLUES & JAZZ” - <https://viewblagoevgrad.com/obekti/blues-jazz-blagoevgrad/>

In the first few days of the New Year the Sourvakar mummer's games in Blagoevgrad resound in the whole region and attract hundreds of tourist and participants in the mummer's games.



The program of the cultural institutes in Blagoevgrad is active and various as well. Over the last couple of years there can be seen a dynamism, more visible presence in the socio-cultural discourse in the region and also in a wider territorial scope – increase in the visits of creative teams in the country and abroad.

The main cultural units, which are involved in the creation of the overall cultural atmosphere in the region, are⁹:

- ✚ CITY ART GALLERY
- ✚ REGIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM
- ✚ DRAMA THEATER “NIKOLA VAPTSAROV”
- ✚ CHAMBER OPERA
- ✚ BIG BAND BLAGOEVGRAD
- ✚ Ensemble „PIRIN”
- ✚ National cultural club “Nikola Yonkov Vaptsarov-1866”
- ✚ Municipal Puppet Theatre
- ✚ Center for Personal and Creative Development of the Children of Blagoevgrad
- ✚ Regional Library "Dimitar Talev"

Another important element of the common cultural and historical route in Blagoevgrad are the key **cultural-historical sites**¹⁰, which make the image of the city dialogical, informative, they create and construct the city's common cultural- historical vision. Some of them may receive their own new messages by using new innovative and technological solutions and cultural concepts by proven professionals.

The sharing of good cultural practices and examples in this handbook will provide ideas for such creative management solutions for improvement of the urban areas.

2.2. Good practices from the cross-border area

✚ Models for reprogramming of the urban areas through culture and art

In one of his studies the French art expert and curator, theorist and founder of the so-called Relative aesthetics Nicolas Bourriaud¹¹ claims that the art can "reprogram" the modernity and can create new meanings in the spaces.

In the city management there is an increase in the development and exploitation of the so called "routes through and by the culture"¹². The geolocalised art can obviously outline one new usage, a new way of perceiving the public space, and makes the viewer/consumer sympathetic, but also responsible for the way, for the route, which this space "appropriates" for itself. The creation of *narratives* for the urban areas forms prerequisites for socialization and *animation*¹³ of the urban locations in a new way and with a new manner.¹⁴

⁹Detailed information about the current programs of the cultural institutes in Blagoevgrad can be found on their websites and on this platform as well: <https://viewblagoevgrad.com/kultura/kulturni-institutit/>

¹⁰These are: the Architectural Complex Varosha, the Clock Tower, the House-Museum of Georgi Izmirliiev, the Church “Presentation of the Blessed Virgin”, Drenovo village, Municipality of Blagoevgrad, other memorable places and signs, related to the Bulgarian military fame on the territory of Municipality of Blagoevgrad.

¹¹*Nicolas Bourriaud*, Postproduction: Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World. New York: Lukas&Sternberg, 2002.; Nicolas Bourriaud, *EshtetiqueRelationelle*, 1998. It is expected that namely Nicolas Bourriaud - theoretician and founder of the so called Relative aesthetics, will curate the Istanbul Biennial for contemporary art in 2019 (September 14 - November 10, 2019). See: https://www.capital.bg/light/neshta/2019/01/25/3380058_izlojbite_koito_ochakvame/

¹²See note 11

¹³The terminology used here is by the ethnologist and folklorist Prof. Vladimir Penchev.

¹⁴See: Isabelle Boof-Vermeesse, „The geolocalised art: in the search of one relational psychogeography“.

The popular practices in the recent years, such as the recycling practices and the new usage in different sectors, are related to the spaces. In certain situations and areas there is no need to create new ones, but rather to focus and orientate to those that already exist - they have to be compacted with ideas and projects, which interact with the community; they have to be used like Nicolas Bourriaud suggests: „*The potential in the routes of the cultural-historical and archaeological heritage, as well as the geo-localized art outlines a new usage, a new way of perceiving the public urban area, and makes the public sympathetic, responsible for the routes, which this area recognizes/appropriates.*”¹⁵

The good examples of reclaimed and *animated* areas in different regions in Bulgaria and around the world, as well as in the region of Blagoevgrad, which is a subject of the study, can provide new ideas, how the cultural-historical and archaeological heritage to be thought about with a new potential. In this way good preconditions for interaction with the cross-border and the Amphipoli's¹⁶ area, which is extremely rich in archeology and historical overlaps from different periods, can be created.

✚ *Promoting the cultural-historical heritage between the municipalities of Gotse Delchev - Prosotsani¹⁷ and Gotse Delchev - Drama, Greece*

The main goal of the project is the popularization and socialization of the cultural-historical heritage in two municipalities around the border - Gotse Delchev and Prosotsani. The main activities include realization of rehabilitations and renovation of municipal museums in both cities, informational and educational platforms have been developed and renewed to become sources of information, a virtual tour has been created in the museum, new technologies have been used rationally and successfully in order to attract young and international audiences. Thus, the strategic goal of ethno-cultural and economic interaction between the two border borders is achieved.

Another example of convergence and cultural exchange between the municipality of Gotse Delchev and another cross-border municipality in Greece - Municipality of Drama, is the traditional visit of residents from Gotse Delchev in the city park in Drama, when the Christmas celebrations, named "Town of the dreams", are opened at the beginning of December every year. Children's programs with fabulous characters and children's attractions are organized, as well as a concert program for the adults. The mayor of the Municipality of Drama makes an official invitation to the residents of Gotse Delchev and the region to visit the "Town of the dreams", so that all of them can have fun together before Christmas. This example is significant for the opportunities, which the cross-border area provides for the exchange of ideas and good practices for convergence at the time around the traditional holidays.

¹⁵Nicolas Bourriaud, Postproduction: Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World. NewYork: Lukas&Sternberg, 2002

¹⁶Amphipolis or Amphipol (Greek: *Ἀμφίπολις*) is an ancient Greek polis, located at the mouth of Struma river in Southeast Macedonia, where the famous Archaeological Museum is located today. The prosperity of the city is reflected in its monumental buildings with mosaic floors and frescoes, as well as restored and socialized archaeological finds. An example for a good socialization of a site is the creation of a network of trails for the visitors, which passes through most of the excavated monuments in the central part of the archaeological site Ancient Amphipolis, so that visitors (following the paths) have the opportunity to see all the open monuments of the Christian Acropolis.

¹⁷The project "Popularization and Preservation of the Cultural and Historical Heritage in the Cross border Region Gotse Delchev - Prosotsani", project acronym CULGER, financed under the European Territorial Cooperation Program Greece-Bulgaria 2007-2013 <http://www.gotsedelchevmuseum.bg/>



✚ *Cultural heritage and sports*¹⁸

The main purpose of the project is to promote the sports tourism in the cross-border area as part of the intangible cultural heritage, to mobilize the potential of the young generation in the town of Razlog – for promotion of the area with all its assets and heritage, as well as preservation and development of sports educational programs. The developed innovative educational program for the schools, the realized youth cross-border exchange – all this leads to increase of tourist flow, and the educational visits and the organized thematic sports tournaments enrich the program of the town and support the local business environment.

The sports activities and the sporting history in Razlog are part of a legacy and diversity which has the potential to develop.¹⁹

¹⁸Project “Promotion and Development of YMC (H) A-Youth Mobilization-Cultural Heritage and Athletic Valorization” (*PROMO – YMC(H)A RAZLOG*), co-financed by the European Territorial Cooperation Programme Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020, started on 21.09.2017 and including the beneficiaries: Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) – Thessaloniki, Faculty of Public Health, Health Care and Sports, South-West University “Neofit Rilski”, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria; Municipality Of Kordelio-Evosmos, Greece; Municipality of Razlog, Bulgaria;

¹⁹After the project activities are completed, a steady increase in the number of visitors (students, athletes, tourists) of the sports facilities is expected, as well as an increase in the usage of the developed educational materials and applications. The knowledge of the community should be increased, especially this, which is related to the traditional local games in Razlog. The accessibility to the cultural-historical heritage also for people with special needs, the support for the creation of new jobs in the cultural sector and the field of new technologies are an important part of the key activities in the project.

✚ *"On the way to early Christianity"²⁰ – Municipality of Razlog*

The example from the Municipality of Razlog shows the effective collaboration between the Municipality of Drama and its Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism (BAAT), the opportunities of the region and the sharing, the socialization of the cultural-historical heritage.

The town of Drama is an appropriate partner in the research of the Christian temples in the cross-border region namely with the great number of archeological finds, related to the Bronze and Stone Age, but especially with the period of the early Christianity. Besides the abundant archaeological museum, there is a special church museum in the town, where you can find a great collection of secular icons in religious and secular style.

Suggestion:

If the collection of the Drama Church Museum visits the Regional Historical Museum in Blagoevgrad within a particular initiative or project, this could be a good occasion for cultural exchange and discussions about the art management and museum work, but it could also help to promote the Christian heritage and assets among the Balkan countries.

View towards the Church Museum in Drama (Εκκλησιαστικό Μουσείο Δράμας)

Sacred images from the 18th and 19th century



²⁰The project was implemented by the Municipality of Razlog for development of the tourist resources in the region, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the town of Drama, the Phare Program, the "Cross-Border Cooperation". The main activities are: creating of a Municipal Program for the conservation and socialization of tourist objects; an archeological study of three sites; restoration, preservation and guarding of the "Written Church"; creating a plan for maintenance and development of the site after the conclusion of the grant contract, promotional materials and internet site - <http://earlychristianity.eu>.

During the project important Christian sites have been restored and socialized, the most prominent of them being the so-called “Written church”. By the revealing of the ruins two churches, which were added one to the other, were found – the first one is from the 5-6th century and the other one – from the 13-14th century, which is actually known among the locals as "The written church" – a name, which is given after the finding of ornaments from the façade of the church, where geometric and stylized floral ornaments can be seen. Revealed are also the ruins of two more churches in the immediate vicinity – “St. Nikola” (12th-14th century) and the White Church. The three churches are in the area Krushe – Pisana, the White Church and the church “St. Nikola” testify to the existence of a large settlement from the time of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom. Around them are found remnants of solid foundations, many fragments from the household and building ceramics, Christian burials and a monetary fund from the 12th century.

The whole church complex is located on a territory with a regulation plan for construction of a golf complex in Betolovoto area. It is important that besides the restoration activities, there have been performed enriching activities on the site. This contributes to the development of the local economy in Razlog.

The so called “Written Church” is an inactive, but it is an important Christian religious object, where the messages of the Christian faith sounded for 1000 years.

The “Written Church” is located at the foot of the North Pirin Mountain, 7 km southwest of the town of Razlog



✚ *How are the European Days of Cultural Heritage celebrated in the town of Sandanski?*

The celebration of the European Cultural Heritage Days in 2018 in Sandanski aroused interest among the guests of the town. The Archaeological Museum in Sandanski initiated and organized a special modern poster exhibition "Heritage, Future and Colorful Magic". It included a variety of materials, diaries, sketches and drawings, made by young locals, who participated in current projects by the museum, some of which are: "Antiquity's seekers", "Draw an Egg", "Get to know the ancient gods", "Let's make an ancient mosaic", "The Forgotten Games of St. Vrach" and others. This gives a *new life* to one accumulated heritage, which is created by young participants, and this heritage is shared with a variety of audiences in yet another way - through the exhibition. The team from the museum shows a model of incorporation of the young generation into the common European heritage and the focus is on the ethno-cultural and folk diversity of Sandanski and the region.

Another curious example from Sandanski is a large-scale organized bell ringing exactly on September 21st at 7 P.M. on the occasion of the day of peace and cultural heritage. The "awakening" as a creative act is realized by the execution of a bell ring on a good occasion and with a strong communal effect, arousing inquiries and searching for information why, what and how.

A poster of the exhibition "Heritage, Future and Colorful Magic" 21.09.2018.



✚ *„Cultural Evenings“, „Traditions and art“ - Bansko*

The projects in Bansko popularize successfully the local traditions, customs and folklore during the summer months (June 23 - September 3), the stay of the tourists is diversified and they are made familiar with the preserved authentic traditions, customs and folklore heritage.

An interesting example of these initiatives is that residents and guests become participants in the organized ethnographic demonstrations²¹, so they recollect (if they have forgotten some of them) or learn old handcrafts, local skills²² in the museum „The Velyanova House”.

The tourists are entertained with one-day-tours to the nearby archaeological sites, organized by the Museum complex: to the Archaeological Complex "Saint Nicola", the late ancient “Sitan Kale” Fortress, in the museum there have been developed interactive educational games for children in foreign languages.

Archaeological heritage in Blagoevgrad - potential for economics and regional development

In the past year 2018 the finds of archaeologists in the Blagoevgrad region attracted the attention of the world and national media, as well as of scientists-archaeologists - an ancient Roman settlement dating back to the 3rd century was discovered. The archeological finds, which started back in 2017, were discovered at the beginning of the construction of the Struma Motorway, and a small part of them was already exhibited at a presentational exhibition "Bulgarian Archeology 2017" in February 2018 at the National Archaeological Institute with a Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Among the artifacts found there are a bronze stamp from the 4th century and a bronze tip of a bird-shaped stick from the 4th-5th century. They are part of the rescuing archeological researches in the area of Shirinite, on the opposite side of Blagoevgrad, where a settlement from the Roman imperial epoch and the Late Antiquity was found. A bronze fibula (type of buckle) from the 2nd century and a bronze clasp from the 4th century are part of the finds, which were found during the researches near the village of Mosnetz. Structures from the Late Roman and the Early Iron Age were investigated²³. One of the assumptions is that the found Roman settlement is "Skaptopara" - the precursor of today's Municipality of Blagoevgrad.

The important questions, which the teams in this key archaeological project in Blagoevgrad are facing, are how the site to be real and professionally socialized, how to build the necessary infrastructure by an European model with all the elements, so that the site starts to attract targeted tourists and becomes popularized, as well as the potential of the region. The flow from the motorway to the city should have easy, fast and direct access to a well-organized archaeological complex, so that the tourists can familiarize with the history and the heritage. There should be a well-developed informational campaign in several languages (English, German, Russian and Greek).

The work on the project continues, both by the excavation teams, as well as in coordination with the local authorities and the other institutions involved, the potential in it is promising for the development of the whole Southwestern region in Bulgaria and has a solid precondition for strengthening the cross-border partnership and interaction of the communities, the local authorities, the academic and research teams between Bulgaria and Greece.

²¹The demonstrations are accompanied by folklore ensembles from the settlements on the territory of the municipality of Bansko, which at the same time demonstrate the local musical richness, expressed by authentic instruments, traditional songs and costumes from the region. For the people, who like folk songs and dances, there are tamboura, bagpipe and singing lessons, as well as folk songs and dance lessons in Chitalishte "Nikola Vaptsarov".

²²Demonstrative examples are the traditional crafts of 'spinning and twisting of wool', 'knitting of overshoes', 'embroidery of souvenir balls', 'crochet', 'making of fabric souvenirs', 'tapestry embroidery', demonstration of Bulgarian embroidery and carving, etc.

²³The research team comes from the National Archaeological Institute with a museum at BAS. The finds are related to the ritual life of the prehistoric people and have great historic value. Stone adzes, various tools made of bones and stone, part of a bracelet made of clams were found there. The ceramic human figures are among the most valuable and unique finds.

The process of archaeological excavations, summer 2018, Blagoevgrad.



Socialization of the archaeological heritage in Thessaloniki

At the beginning of 2018 during archaeological excavations in Thessaloniki an ancient city was revealed. That happened during the construction process of the metro line in the city, which started in 2006, but because of the enormous area, this process was slowing down. The archaeologists have discovered more than 300,000 finds, including monumental burial and architectural ensembles, 50,000 coins and a wide array of artifacts, which provide an almost complete picture of the city from the 4th century BC under the modern Thessaloniki. The discoveries are made by teams from the modern Archaeological Museum in Thessaloniki²⁴ during the years of excavations of the metro construction sites in the city, as well as on the Egnatia Motorway.

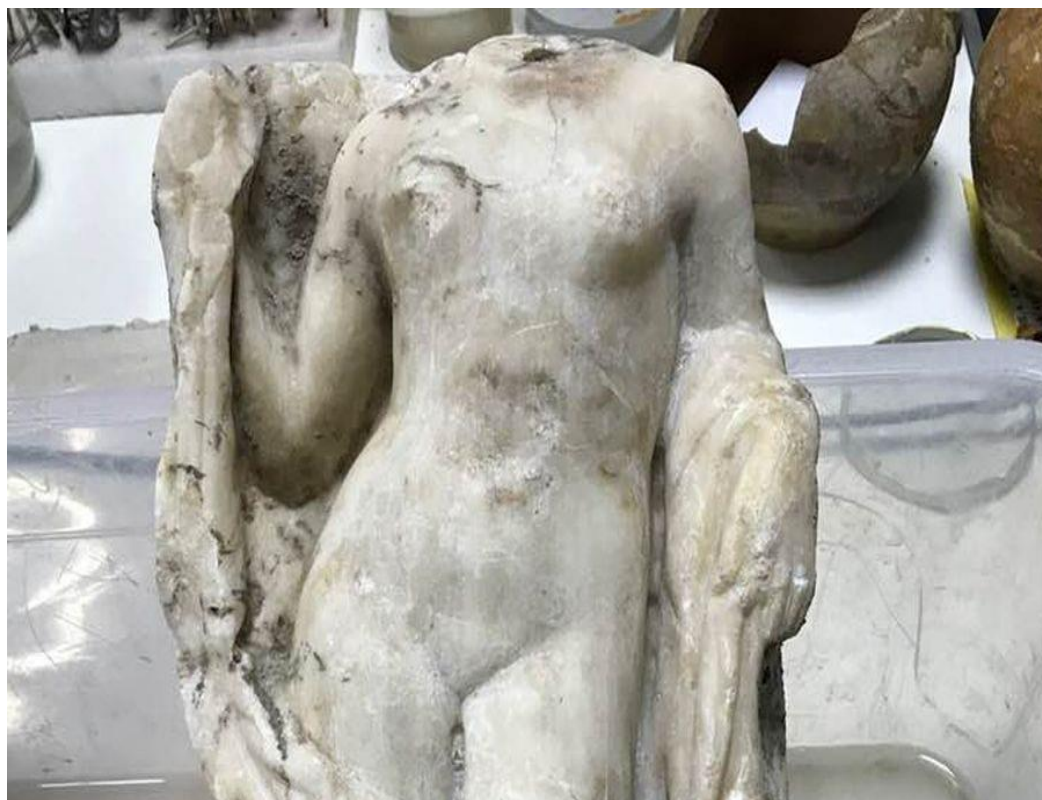
The socialization: Part of the unique finds are being prepared to be exhibited at the “*Agia Sofia*” and “*Venizelos*” metro stations - an extremely popular approach for socializing the cultural-historical heritage – in that way the people can see it daily and can receive information about it. So the ethnic memory is preserved in time and can be passed on to the next generations. That’s why the search for approaches to display the archaeological and historical heritage on public places should be encouraged, in order to contribute to its popularization.

A good example of an innovative approach in the managing of a museum is namely the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki - a various program, performing boutique concerts, audiovisual expositions for more detailed information, a modern bilingual site with a detailed and up-to-date program²⁵.

²⁴<https://www.amth.gr/en>

²⁵<https://www.amth.gr/en/calendar>

A unique headless statue of the ancient goddess Aphrodite was found during the excavations in Thessaloniki. Photo: Life-Events.gr²⁶



✚ *"Cultural- historical heritage from the lands of the Thracian Satrae"²⁷*

The project "From the lands of the ancient Thracian Satrae" is a collaboration and sustainability between the academic institutions and local cultural organizations.

As a result of the project, a modernly equipped research and educational center for ancient cultures was built, whereby ideas and research are being exchanged and so the Center is turned into an authoritative unit for supporting interdisciplinary studies, organizing research expeditions and scientific conferences, public lectures and forums. The scope of the Center is being expanded not only for the SWU, but also on a regional and international level.

The induction of such research to a significant part of the cultural-historical heritage of Southwestern Bulgaria - the cultural heritage of the Thracian Satrae - has its strategic goal - not only to extend and deepen the research thought, knowledge and scientific quests, but also to be a good basis and prerequisite for the development of the cultural-historical tourism in this

²⁶<https://neoskosmos.com/en/111611/archaeologists-unearth-headless-aphrodite-statue-in-thessaloniki/#.Wo8fs86ioW8.twitter>

²⁷ The research project was realized by a team from the University Research Center for Ancient European and Easterly Mediterranean Cultures, Faculty of Law and History - Department of General History; Faculty of Arts - Department of Music at SWU "Neofit Rilski" - Blagoevgrad; National Archaeological Institute with Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences - Section "Thracian Archeology"; National Astronomical Observatory "Yuri Gagarin"; Regional History Museum - Blagoevgrad; Municipal Historical Museum – Razlog. The studied problems are topical - a study of the Thracian Satrae, the most zealous guardians of the Thracian religion and spirituality and the holders of the central sanctuary of Dionysus - Sabazius. A folk survey was carried out by the village of Pirin and the Municipality of Sandanski; a field observation of the results by the Greek archaeologists for the locations of Dionis Sabasios' sanctuary in northern Greece and the evidences of the Thracian-Greek cultural contacts in the Hellenic colonies on the Thracian coast at the mouths of the Struma and Mesta rivers; Bulgarian-Greek scientific exchange.

region of Bulgaria and the Balkans, to enhance the inter-academic exchange in the Balkans and to encourage travel agents and moderators to seek and provide thematic visits and programs.

✚ „The Bridge – crossroad of cultures” - Kardzhali²⁸

In the Municipality of Kardzhali, as a part of the cross-border area, an innovative cultural event takes place in a complex of several types of activities, divided into two groups – “Days of Arts” (*Day of Photography "Me and My Town", Music Day, Day of Fairytales, Workshop on Photography, Weekend Festival / Living Concept / “The Bridge”*), and in the second group there are logistic and public activities, such as: exploring the multicultural memory; publishing an advertising catalog about the traditions in the target area.

During the project equipment and furnishing (sound, lighting and video equipment, multimedia, screens, showcases, etc.) are purchased for the organization of innovative cultural events. The specially developed virtual guide "Kardzhali through the eyes of art" presents a new type of cultural events, which are performed on non-traditional public places, mapping and outdoor sound-visual performances.

Image from the project in Kardzhali



²⁸The project is under OP "Regional Development" 2007-2013, beneficiary Kardzhali Municipality with partner "Youth Center KRYG" - https://www.kardjali.bg/?pid=2,2&id_news=3751

✚ „Perperikon – Past for Future”²⁹

The project is aimed at a wide range of visitors and people, who are interested in the past of this region. The main activities are related to conservation and restoration works and exhibition of the ancient and medieval town of Perperikon, promotion of the site.

The interesting thing about this project is that a special survey is being carried out among the parents of the children from four kindergartens in the town, which are included in the project; thematic night event "Fairytale around the fireplace" was organized with the purpose of learning the Bulgarian literary language in kindergartens with mixed population. And the organized studios "Dancing notes", mothers' salon "Clever woman – beautiful woman", fathers' club "Fisherman without armor", Trust School and the so called Agency "Crazyland" make the results of the project extremely sustainable and useful to the community. They help the young generation to join to the traditions, and the adults - to pass on their knowledge to the children. For more details watch the movie about Perperikon.³⁰

✚ Examples from Smolyan



In this typical Rhodope town there are examples, which deserve attention. One of them is the active activity of the Regional Museum of History "Stoyu Shishkov" - Smolyan, which develops its current program for 2019 under the motto "*100 km away from the European Capital of Culture - Plovdiv 2019*".³¹

The museum in Smolyan works for the realization of creative initiatives, among which there is an interesting atelier for production of *Rhodope folds*, the elaboration of a panel project, which embodies the Rhodope culture. Some of the projects, which are dedicated to the

²⁹Project under Measure 1 "Restoration, renovation and preservation of cultural heritage" of BG 08 Program "Cultural heritage and modern arts" 2009-2014, beneficiary Municipality of Kardzhali and partner Regional Historical Museum - Kardzhali (RHM), (2015-2017). As a result of the project, 11 objects from the ancient and medieval city of Perperikon were restored and exhibited; organized marketing and popularizing events, a seminar "Perperikon - Past for Future", press conferences and printed publications; a site about the project was created;

³⁰<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVmGutVjNb8>

³¹In the initiative take part the Smolyan Municipality, museum specialists, representatives from the Art Gallery, the Regional Library, the Smolyan Regional Office, lecturers from the New Bulgarian University and from the Institute of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the main goal is that the town and the Municipality can be included in some of the events, organized by the European Capital of Culture - Plovdiv 2019.

conduct of the European Capital of Culture - Plovdiv 2019, are the First Fair of the Bagpipe Art "Apostol Kisyov" in the village of Stoykite, the fair "With the songs of Georgi Chilingirov" in the village of Polkovnik Serafimovo and many others.

The town of Smolyan is an example and a model for the inclusion of young people in the local multicultural traditions and assets. This was developed under the project "My ethnicity is part of the culture of the world", co-funded by the Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities³². In the Center for Support for Personal Development (CSPD) - United Children Complex – Smolyan, which is a municipal institution in the system of pre-school and school education, children and pupils are educated free of charge in key areas of the knowledge. A possibility is given to the young people to present the cultural specifics of the different ethnic minorities, living in the Rhodope Mountains - Bulgarian, Bulgarian Mohammedans, Turkish, and Roma.³³ Functioning various schools and interest groups provide a wide range of choice possibilities and development for children in dance, sports, creative theatrical activities, writing essays, painting, learning foreign languages, etc.³⁴

3. Good practices and examples from Bulgaria and the world

The examples of popularizing and socializing the cultural-historical and archaeological heritage from Bulgaria and the world will provide us with a more innovative and modern approach to understanding the spaces, their managing and their preserving. In Blagoevgrad, there is a potential to deepen the dazing and the searching for new interpretations of the history, of the local memory and folklore, to a wider range for the cross-border region.

The selected models in the field of the cultural "quiet revolutions" are various and heterogeneous namely in order to provoke the upgrading and delivery of new ideas in the management.

To find the potential in the urban spaces: examples from Samokov

One of the artists, who take part in the International Symposium of Painting and Sculpture in the town of Samokov, is an artist from Tarnovo, who lives in Madrid - Hristo Gelov³⁵. His conceptual projects not only transformed some objects of the cultural-historical heritage, but also gave those new insights and life.

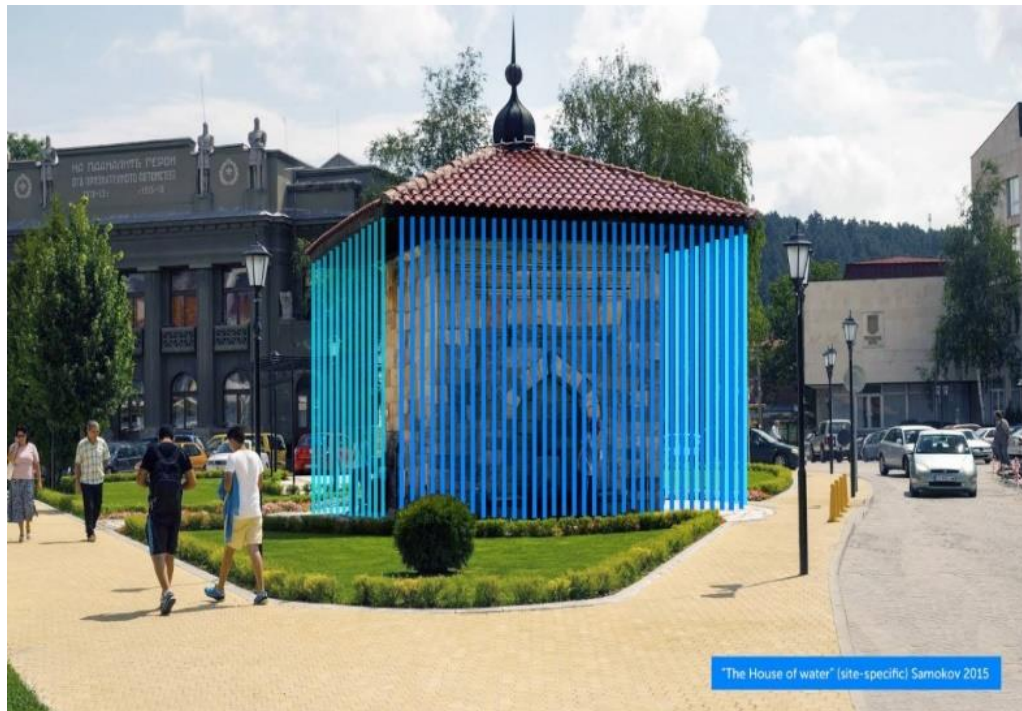
³²The project for the building of a Center for Personal Development Support /CPDS/ was funded under the competition procedure of the Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities (CICDEM) at the Ministry of Education and Science with a duration 01.03.2011 - 31.07.2012, in accordance with the Strategy for Equal Integration of Children from Ethnic Minorities by the Ministry of Education and Science.

³³<http://odk-smolyan.eu/proekt.html>

³⁴The results of the project in Smolyan activated the creative energy of the students for a positive change in the attitude towards different cultures, the potential of cultural diversity and the need to support the personal growth and realization of children from different ethnic groups were given a new meaning.

³⁵Hristo Gelov has been living in Spain for more than 25 years. He has graduated "Mural painting" at the National Art Academy - Sofia and "Graphic Technologies" at UniversidaddeComplutense, Madrid. After 20 years of experience in the field of the audiovisual industry and multimedia design, his creative search unfolds in the new media of visual communication. In 2012, Gelov founded a creative team, the OpenStreetart - UrbanandActionart in Madrid. He is a laureate of the grand prize in the McLaurenWall-to-Wall competition in Montreal. Through his experimental video, which shows geometric forms dancing under the arrangement of digital sounds, Gelov provides an original perspective on the evolution of the art media and their connection to the new technologies. Among his most famous projects are the colorful pedestrian footpaths in the Spanish town of Torelodones. In Veliko Tarnovo in 2016 he performed a modern mapping show on the facade of the Rafael Mihaylov exhibition halls, he accomplished and another project – art installation, called "Orange circles" - he threw 12 models of life-belts, colored in orange, in Yantra River.

Hristo Gelov transformed the Big Fountain in “The House of Water”, Samokov 2015



The innovative installation does not disturb the functionality and architecture of the fountain, but has the purpose to emphasize the living liquid coming from it, and gives a sign to the people to be careful and responsible to this natural wonder - *the water*.

The second project, realized in 2017 in Samokov, was the transformation and revival of the old wooden fire tower - it became a modern and attractive kinetic art installation (See the video: <https://vimeo.com/232674693>)

The process of the building of the kinetic installation “Breathe” – the fireman’s tower in Samokov, author: Hristo Gelov, august 2017.





Both art installations by the visual artist Hristo Gelov in Samokov gave rise to a debate among the local community, whether and how such modern solutions disturb the comfort of the residents and the functionality of the sites, how does the overall appearance of the city change, are more tourists attracted, are new other ideas provoked, etc.

The abandoned spaces like the fireman's tower can bring new messages, moods, if the artists' creativity is used. That's why the "Breath" Project changed the wooden tower with all these 280 specially made children's whirligigs in grassy green color. The installation "Breathe" is inspired by the power of nature, by this natural treasure that the people at the foot of Rila Mountain have, and the green color is a symbol of the new beginnings, of growth and fertility. Thus, the fire tower attracted not only tourists and guests, but also the locals, children and adults, who went to the installation, in order to look at it and to take pictures as a souvenir.

This example of revived urban spaces is eloquent enough to show, how the abandoned spaces can be *brought back to life* with creative solutions and original ideas, how this cultural act leads to positive development and popularization of the community and the locations, and how new meanings about the town's heritage can be given.

Suggestion:

Following the example of the innovative projects in Samokov: There are some objects in Blagoevgrad, which can be "revived, woken up" for the community in a new way and with new ideas. For example, the Clock Tower, built in 1867 - one of the oldest symbols of the Bulgarian national revival in Blagoevgrad, related to many legends and traditions from the people's past, and many other objects, charged with history and regional symbolism.

✦ *Transforming "the defect into an effect": An example from the Portuguese artist Artur Bordalo*

The Portuguese artist Arthur Bordalo provokes our thinking and awakens our sensors to environmental responsibility and attention to and for the nature. He transforms the urban waste into impressive installations, into real art pieces with messages and highly influential works, which fill the urban spaces³⁶ and create another environment, around which performances, concerts, skateboarding meetings and other activities are made. This is how these people actually consume his art, while sharing the common space.

Installations by Artur Bordalo



³⁶<http://webstage.bg/art/3600-da-prevarnesh-bokluka-v-izkustvo.html>



✚ *Opening to New Horizons: Historical Museum in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, China*³⁷

The Architect and University Professor Wang Shu was awarded with the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize³⁸ for 2012 for his work on this museum, built in the period between 2003 and 2008. Wang Shu won the prize for his original approach by opening up to new horizons, which take from the spirit and the history of the place and provide the cultural continuation and the revival of the traditions, and to practice responsible architecture. This approach is of great importance in China, where over the past decades a debate in the context of the urbanization process has taken place, which confronts the idea of architecture, anchored in the traditions or of an architecture that should only look into the future. Together with his partner and wife Lou Veniu, Wang Shu founded An Amateur Architecture Studio 15 in 1997. They have an original approach to design and their works are characterized by impressive monumental presence, but perfect features and radiate a relaxed atmosphere. They usually use materials that are reusable or recycled, also waste. In the building process of the museum joined local craftsmen, who use traditional older authentic construction techniques.

The example for the construction of the historical museum in Ningbo, China shows how the museum, which was planned as a 30,000-square-meter concrete fortress, is becoming a massive cultural fortress. It is dedicated to the locals, so that they can keep part of their memories, and it is no accident that the architect Wang Shu speaks of the museum as a *mountain*.

The Ningbo Historic Museum, which is built from recycled materials, focuses on the history of the town, on the traditional customs and local memory. Namely this example shows, how the memory and the heritage can be used as a tool for urban policies, and how new environment friendly approaches can be used and implemented in the planning and building of urban sites.

³⁷The information and photos are taken from the studio's website of the architect Wang Shu, from the Museum in Louisiana – Denmark and the specialized publications in www.archdaily.com, www.dezeen.com, www.arquitecturaviva.com, www.architectmagazine.com).

³⁸The Pritzker Prize is considered to be the equivalent of the Nobel Prize for architecture.



✚ *Bunratty Castle, County Clare, Ireland*³⁹

Another interesting example is the Bunratty Castle, located near Shannon International Airport, southwest of Ireland. It is turned into an attractive tourist area and the number of tourists increases by around 10% every year, according to statistics⁴⁰.

The castle is an ideal base for researching the entire southwestern area of Ireland - it is a medieval castle with an adjoining park, with houses and buildings from the 19th century, which formed the medieval village of Bunratty. As an attraction, the castle is the finest and most authentic medieval fortress in Ireland, it is from the 15th century, and it was completely restored in 1950, so that it can represent the original glamour of the most part of the architecture, furniture, upholstery, artwork and decorations, which are originals from the 15th and 16th centuries. The castle offers the visitors over 450 objects and artifacts, which can be seen also on the website of the castle, in order to encourage and educate the visitors and those, who are interested in medieval Irish culture.

³⁹The information and photos are from the website of the castle and the park FolkBunratty, the site of the administrator ShannonGroupplc, the official websites: www.bunratty.ie; www.bunrattycollection.com; www.bunrattybanquet.com; www.shannonheritage.com; www.heritageisland.com; www.bunrattycastlehotel.com; www.discoveringireland.com; <https://tourismni.com/facts-and-figures/tourism-performance-statistics2/>

⁴⁰In 2017 over 9.5 million foreign tourists visited Ireland, but it is important to note that a huge part of the visitors are of Irish origin, who live in other countries and visit the area because of a touch / return to their Irish roots, to their cultural-historical and folklore-ethnographic heritage.

In the near 2.6 hectare park there are 30 houses and typical buildings from different historical periods, scattered to the foundations of the thick walls of the castle in order to show, how the villages were grouped around the fortresses in the Middle ages. The houses are authentic, they were selected and brought from all over Ireland in order to be representative for the urban collective, typical for the 19th century. There are also simple fisherman's and farm houses, the doctor's house, the bank's pub, the fabric store, the smithy's studio and etc. The park and some of the houses are animated and organized to perform different daily tasks, as they are preserved in the collective memory of the region, and the visitors can interact with them and to experience the emotion of one other time. To exploit the beliefs and legends of magical beings, with which Ireland is well-known, the park has a tidy meadow, named "The Elf Village" - a real attraction for the tourists.

The activities in the castle include the organization of medieval dinners, historical restorations, medieval sports battles, authentic musical programs also for children, teambuilding packages, a well-developed and organized shopping network and activities, which create excellent conditions for the visitors and close the circle of things, which the tourists may need.

In the vicinity of the castle are developed places for commercial activities such as: souvenir shops; an exhibition art gallery of local Irish artists and craftsmen; public catering areas; shops with local products, ateliers for production or demonstration; domestic horse transport.

Part of the catering area in the castle Bunratty



View towards the Bunratty Castle, County Clare, Ireland



The management approach of this complex is accomplished by Shannon Group-13⁴¹ - - strategic establishments for a public-private partnership. ShannonHeritage manages seven national tourist sites; its activity and its ability to work in competitive economic environment meet the international standards. To the success of this enterprise contribute the help from the local municipal councils, the chambers of commerce and chambers, employment agencies, foreign investment agencies, the governmental agency to help the business environment, national tourism agencies, and the national tourism authority. The tourism development and the market expansion for Ireland are possible only through co-ordination of the politics, the investments and measures for their support at all levels.

⁴¹ShannonHeritage is one of the four largest business establishments in Ireland and one of the firsts created in the 60's for the need of a tourist attraction for the passengers of the transatlantic planes, who landed at the international airport; in the tourist season there are over 300 employees. It is estimated that the operator's activity contributes to around 20 million dollars to and from which benefit local companies from different sectors, including the accommodation and tourist services.

4. *Conclusions and suggestions*

The development of each region requires professional decisions and informed management policies, active dialogue with the communities and the search for new, different and innovative suggestions.

The cultural accumulations, the folklore traditions, the archaeological layers, the mythologies and traditions are an original source of ideas, and the new technologies provide opportunities, which can transmit and promote one past into a new knowledge and with new solutions by minimizing the distances.

Blagoevgrad occupies a strategic geographical position and has a key role for the cross-border area, a strong community influence like an economy and socialization of sites, that's why the potential for development and interaction with partner organizations as well as with the municipality of Amphipoli is sustainably built over time through concrete projects. Interactions in a cultural context between the two municipalities have a real potential to develop and expand through the particular programs of the cities and the respective local institutions.

General suggestions:

- ✚ Improving the interaction and exchange of the cultural and tourist programs between the two municipalities / areas - Blagoevgrad and Amphipoli;
- ✚ Creation of cross-border tourist networks for the development of a sustainable tourism in order to present the regional identity and the characteristic image of the cross-border area;
- ✚ Activation of local researches on the resources in the area and their evaluation;
- ✚ Development of a joint cross-border marketing strategy for cultural tourism and promotion of the cultural-historical heritage;
- ✚ Targeted promotion of key festivals among the local communities;
- ✚ Attracting pre-organized visitor groups from Greece from the Municipality of Amphipolis for the Francofolies Festival, the jazz festival or the thematic festivals for children;
- ✚ Researching opportunities to connect with Francophone organizations and schools in the Municipality of Amphipolis in order to attract them to the thematic accompanying educational or social-integrational events during the Francofolies Festival.
- ✚ Visits by students from French high schools from the Amphipoli area in Blagoevgrad and vice versa, on special occasions, for example - the Festival Francofolies;
- ✚ Organization of theatrical cinema evenings, which present local traditions, art and culture;
- ✚ Organizing a thematic seminar between the two municipalities in order to exchange creative ideas, which include the local creative artists, artists, musicians; opportunities for individual appearances by artists from Blagoevgrad in Amphipolis and vice versa;
- ✚ Organization of a specialized seminar for an exchange of experience in museum and art management and good practices for interactive portable and digital exhibitions and multimedia projects;
- ✚ Exploring opportunities for joint Bulgarian-Greek archaeological researches and excavations of topical sites in the two countries; ideas for common European projects in this direction;
- ✚ Exchange of developed prepared cultural programs in the two regions - Blagoevgrad and Amphipoli - theater productions, concerts, operas, etc.
- ✚ Developing smartphone applications for the cultural program in the cross-border area;

- ✚ Conducting different public actions in order to attract more and diverse audiences, for certain events: flashmob, presence of mimes in public places in the town, street events - street ballet, modern dances and more.
- ✚ Discussion of opportunities and exchange of ideas in the field of sport, ethno and eco tourism.

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