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ЮГОЗАПАДЕН УНИВЕРСИТЕТ „НЕОФИТ РИЛСКИ“, БЛАГОЕВГРАД

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НЯКОИ ПРЕДПОСТАВКИ ЗА РАЗВИТИЕТО НА УСТОЙЧИВ КУЛТУРЕН ТУРИЗЪМ В СТРАНИТЕ ОТ ЮГОИЗТОЧНА ЕВРОПА

SOME PREREQUISITES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL TOURISM IN THE COUNTRIES OF SOUTHEAST EUROPE

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Abstract: The idea of sustainable development has emerged as an alternative to the growing in the last few decades environmental crisis. It was formed in the seventies of the twentieth century, emphasizing on the link between environment and economy.

The concept of sustainable development has gained great popularity with the report of the World Commission for Environment and Development (1987), in which is added also the human dimension of this term. That document catalyzes the development of the concept of sustainability and provoked numerous disputes about its nature. They found their solution in one or another extent during the Conference on Environment and Development (Rio 1992), Johannesburg (2002) and conducted in the range of 2002-2007 forums in Goteborg, Lisbon and Leipzig.

Sustainable tourism is a new concept and is a continuation of the idea of sustainable development. Sustainable tourism seeks not only to minimize the impact on the biological environment, but also to shape the views of tourists before and during their journeys and to cause environment friendly tourism practices, at the stage of formation of the tourist markets, issuing travelers. This is evolution in tourism, which on one hand is consistent with the interests of the welcoming party and on the other with the interests of the visitors. All activities in the area of meeting, must comply with certain capacities of natural resources, i.e. to be respected the principles of optimization and economy of the used resources.

“Cultural tourism is a type of tourism that uses as a resource heritage - cultural and natural values of the environment, storing the collective memory of society” (IKOMOS, 1999). According to Krastev (2009) this type of tourism is split between two specific types of tourism: cultural (inspired by the cultural heritage and diversity of living cultures) and ecotourism (environmentally oriented) which most often have a common field of action, in natural areas rich of cultural heritage. Both types of tourism aim to achieve sustainable results, when not only use but also protect the values and authenticity of their specific and often irreversible resources. Therefore, trends in the development of cultural tourism largely reflect trends in the role of cultural heritage and tourism development in the world today and tomorrow.

Based on the concept of sustainable tourism development, the article attempts to launch the idea of building a conceptual model for water cultural corridor in the coastal areas of Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece.

Key words: sustainable tourism, cultural tourism, development

1. INTRODUCTION

The idea of sustainable development has emerged as an alternative to the

growing environmental crisis over the past few decades. It was shaped in the seventies of the twentieth century,

focusing on the relationship between environment and economy.

The concept of sustainable development has gained great popularity with the Report of the World Commission for Environment and Development (1987), in which is also added the human dimension of this term. The mentioned document catalyzes the development of the idea of sustainability and raises many disputes about its essence. In 1991 the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) issued together "The Strategy for Sustainable Life on Earth". It develops further the definition of that term as an improvement of the quality of people's lives within the framework of the possible capacity of the supporting ecosystems.

A new impetus was given by the Conference of Environment and Development (Rio, 1992). On the forum the approved Plan 21, became the basis for many international, national and local initiatives in this direction. In the Rio's Conference was also adopted a declaration, consisting of 27 principles. The first one states that man is the central unit in handling the issues of sustainable development which is oriented towards protection of their health and quality of life in harmony with nature. It is believed that this is a new philosophy in the development of society, based on the integration of social, environmental and economic aspects of decision in the practical activities to ensure the life and work of future generations. Since the beginning of the new millennium, the concept of sustainable development has been increasingly perceived by organizations as the only possible balance between the interests of business, people, society and what is most important, for the future generations. The Forum in Johannesburg (World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002), deepen and broaden the concept of sustainable

development. There was also adopted the implementation plan, focusing on public-private partnership. With no less importance are the forums in Goteborg, Lisbon and Leipzig held between the years 2002 and 2007.

„Sustainable development necessitate to preserve the potential of the Earth to support life in all its diversity. Sustainable development aims to protect the environment, to achieve social equity and quality of life, cultural diverse and dynamic economy that provides jobs and prosperity for all. Sustainable development is an overall target of the European Union. Sustainable Development Strategy of the mentioned organization was updated in 2006. Strategic documents designed by the Member States towards the promotion of sustainable practices, supplemented the adopted in Lisbon *Strategy for Economic Growth and Employment* (Lisbon strategy) while stressing that economic, social and environmental objectives could be mutually supportive and developed and must be developed successfully.“(Draganov, 2007)¹

Sustainable tourism is a new concept and is a continuation of sustainable development, which was launched at the conference in Rio (1992). Sustainable tourism aims not only to minimize the impact on the biological environment, but also to shape the views of tourists before and during their journeys and to cause more environment friendly tourist practices in the stage of markets formation, issuing tourists. This is a tourism evolution, which is firstly consistent with the interests of the local community and secondly, with the visitors. All activities in the meeting area must comply with certain capacities of natural resources, i.e. to respect the principle for optimization and economy of the used resources.

¹ Draganov R., 2007, Sustainable cultural tourism in the Trans-Balkan Cultural Corridor, in http://seecorridors.eu/filebank/file_329.pdf, p. 1

In 2005 the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) identified in the document "Agenda for 21 century" twenty goals for sustainable tourism: economic viability, local prosperity, quality of employment, social equality, visitors' satisfaction, local control, social welfare, cultural wealth, physical integrity, biological diversity, efficient use of resources, environmental cleanliness.

Tourism can be an instrument to support or stimulate the recovery and economic development, as well as to increase quality of life for visitors and host communities. In various countries, Sustainable tourism development is assessed by the European Commission as a contribution to the Sustainable development of European society. Southeast European countries and in particular Bulgaria, Romania and Greece have substantial potential for the development of cultural tourism in the network of cultural and natural values as well as tourism products united by the Trans-Balkan Cultural Corridor. (Draganov 2007)¹

According to the International Cultural Tourism Charter of ICOMOS (Mexico, 1999) cultural tourism is a type of tourism, which uses heritage as a resource, cultural and natural values of the environment, preserving the collective memory of society. It is assumed that this integrated resource is shared between two specific types of tourism: cultural (motivated by the historical and cultural heritage and diversity of living culture) and ecotourism (environmental oriented), which often have a common field of action – in the natural areas, rich of cultural heritage. Both types of tourism are trying to achieve a sustainable outcome, when not only use but also protect the values and authenticity of their specific and usually irreversible

resources.

Therefore, trends in the development of cultural tourism largely reflect trends on the role of cultural heritage and tourism in today's and tomorrow's world. Cultural Corridor Concept is a complex interdisciplinary subject of discussion. For a first time this term was used by the Romanian professor Razvan Teodorescu (1974) to characterize a specific phenomenon of Southeastern Europe: the traditional territorial directions in the region, along which circulate cultural values, ideas and innovations in an ongoing continuity of relationships, influences and interactions. (Krastev, 2009)²

Early realization of the cultural corridors' idea was initiated in 1999 when experts from ICOMOS (Bulgaria) had launched the idea of developing trans-national project "Cultural Routes of Southeast Europe", in the campaign of the Council of Europe, "Europe, common heritage". In the realization of this project 50 experts were included from all ten countries of the region: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Turkey and Croatia. In little more than a year, the mentioned expert group, under the leadership of the Bulgarian professor T. Krastev, using a common methodology, managed to develop a database and electronic maps of the national cultural routes in their countries, which were summarized by IKIMOS (Bulgaria) in six maps of the regional cultural heritage in Southeast Europe.

Later, in 2003, during the Regional Forum "Dialogue among Civilizations" in Ohrid (Macedonia), the Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov focus the

¹ Draganov R., 2007, in the same

² Krastev T., 2009, Historical Territories, Integration field for culture and tourism, in the Electronic Edition Liter Net, 05.06.2009, Cultural Heritage: Education – Science – Preservation – Integrated in Tourism (Heritage: ESPRIT)

attention of his regional colleagues on this project. He estimated the great potential of the cultural corridors for the future development of Southeastern Europe, as an integral part of the European continent. The president Parvanov suggested that in the autumn of 2004 in Bulgaria should have been conducted a regional forum of the states' heads of that part of the continent, dedicated to the rich cultural heritage. A few months later, the General Director of UNESCO Koichiro Matsuura undertook that the organization led by him, would be a co-sponsor of this forum. On this basis, after consultation with representatives of UNESCO, was specified the forum's topic : "Cultural Corridors in South-Eastern Europe-a common past and shared heritage, a key to the future partnership". The realization of this idea was a major political act made by Bulgaria, which aimed to establish a network of cultural corridors based on a shared cultural inheritance, unified infrastructure and the creation of new cultural routes- a base for cultural tourism and a guarantee for sustainable development in the region. The aim of this political platform, unique for the Balkans, was to reduce the intra-regional confrontation, to overcome the negative stereotypes and create a new image of the region. All this is dependent on the understanding, that if the Balkans are peaceful, they will create conditions for sustainable development and welfare of the local communities. (www.nationalheritagebg.org)

Very positive role in this area played the organized regional forum in Varna (2005) attended by the presidents of the mentioned countries, the General Director of UNESCO Koichiro Matsuura and the General Secretary of the European Council Teri Devis, with representatives of ICOMOS and the European Commission, and experts in the cultural heritage and cultural tourism.

Key objectives of the forum in Varna were:

- To be identified the concrete measures for the conservation and development of specific and unique character of the cultural heritage of Southeastern Europe as a crossroads between civilizations and religions, and as a connection and integration of the region into the European common space;
- To be made known to the Europe and the world, the extremely rich cultural heritage of Southeastern Europe and to show the little-known image of the region as one of the cradles of the European and world civilization;
- To be promoted the indivisible and integral nature of the cultural heritage in Southeast Europe as a basis for overcoming the division of national, ethnic and religious grounds, to strengthen the sense of regional ownership and responsibility for the development of regional self-confidence and pride.

From first to second of June, 2006 in Opatija (Croatia) was organized the second regional forum titled "Communication of Heritage- a New Vision for Southeastern Europe", which was dedicated to the cultural corridors. On the forum was adopted the "Strategy for Identification, Conservation, Sustainable Use and Promotion of the Cultural Corridors in South East Europe". Participants in the meeting (six heads of state, two ministers, the Secretary of the State and two ambassadors) welcomed in the final declaration, the strengthening of the regional dialogue in Southeast Europe at the highest level. They noted that it creates a new atmosphere of good neighborly relations, mutual understanding and opportunities for development of projects in different areas. The declaration emphasized the necessity of observing various international documents pertaining to the preservation of cultural heritage. It also stresses on the importance of communications to promote the exchange of knowledge for the regional cultural heritage and especially the joint

responsibility for its defense. The participants of the Forum in Opatija welcomed the adoption of "The Strategy for Identification, Preservation and Promotion of the Study of cultural corridors in Southeastern Europe".

The theme of the next regional forum was " Cultural Diversity-a Bridge Between Cultural Heritage and the Culture of the Future". The reunion was held in July 2007 in Sibiu (Romania) - the European Capital of the Culture for 2007.

On it was emphasized the importance of the developing policies for the protection of cultural heritage and the followed joint actions. As an expression of their new commitments, the participants of the meeting adopted a Final Declaration.

On sixteenth and seventeenth of November, the same year, in Plovdiv placed a new regional forum on theme "Trans-Balkan Cultural Corridor Greece-Bulgaria-Romania: a shared heritage and common future" That is part of a project initiated by the Regional Governor of Plovdiv in accordance with the Communication Strategy for the Republic of Bulgaria to the EU in 2007, developed in partnership with the Association for Cultural Tourism. One of the objectives set by the forum was to encourage the adoption of common action by establishing mechanisms for partnership between stakeholders for a balanced sustainable development of cultural heritage, cultural tourism and cultural industries in Eastern Trans-Balkan Road as a basis for protective regional policy, and the use of cultural values.

The main topic of the held in 2008 in Athens (Greece) Regional Forum was " **Intercultural Encounters on Marine,River and Lake Routes of South East Europe**". The aim of the meeting was to put stress on the specific role that water played in the development and dissemination of the culture in Southeast Europe, revealing the contacts and interconnections in the region during the different historical periods, developed thanks to the presence of sea, lake and

river basins. The outlined guidelines for action are:

- Mapping of all water corridors according to the time periods;
- Creating a site with available information about the water corridors;
- Establishing a coordinated regional policy for cultural tourism along the water corridors;
- Creating an educational network for teaching the water heritage of Southeastern Europe

From third to fourth of June 2009 in Cetinje (Montenegro), was held the last for now Regional Forum for Southeast Europe, concerning the management of cultural diversity in tourism development. In the adopted Declaration was highlighted that the cultural diversity underlying the national identity and is a prerequisite for regional cooperation. On the Forum was pointed out the role of the heritage in the development of sustainable cultural tourism, promoting the exchange and dialogue between cultures. It was also stressed the importance of cultural routes and corridors for the tourism progress in Southeastern Europe.

In 2010, is expected the next regional forum in this field to take place in Turkey. It is entitled: " Name of music as a metaphor for cultural tourism".

"The cultural tourism is a "child" of two parents, culture and tourism, as a result of "marriage", although marriage of convenience. " **Krastev(2009).¹Therefore, the trends for the development of cultural tourism to a large extent reflect, trends in the role of cultural heritage and tourism for today's and tomorrow's world. "Heritage, according to the European Council forecasts will have a unique role in the information society of 21 century. In the era of globalization and unprecedented mobility, precisely it, on equal economic conditions will determine the human selection of a**

¹ Krastev.T, 2009, in the same

living environment. Environments with memory, more and more will attract people, activities and investments.

Contemporary tourism does not recognize borders, it requires freedom of movement and choice of destinations. On that basis are formed some important trends in the development of cultural tourism:

1. It performed an integration and a closer economic relationship between culture and tourism. Revenues from cultural tourism can contribute significantly for maintenance and conservation of the cultural heritage.

2. Irreplaceable commercial value gains the total cultural and historical packages including cultural, tourist, transport and information infrastructure, complemented by attractive by-products and activities. Cultural values, often integrated with the nature ones, are in the heart of this system, treated as a finished tourist product with a renewing infrastructure around it, which makes it a permanently attractive.

3. "The name of the village, the territory and the country turns into a marketable commercial product, which is launched worldwide with an overall marketing and advertising, because it creates a favorable climate for investment and turizam. The cultural heritage is a key element of the image.

In recent years, the cultural tourism develops as one of the most successful tourism industries in the world. The share of travels motivated by culture and heritage is constantly growing. Tourism practices manifested the cultural heritage as a true "gold mine" for the development of national economies.

In this train of thought, a special role for the integration links between cultural heritage and tourism acquire the historical territory. It is a complete cultural environment comprising a single or group cultural values, cultural landscapes, historical settlements, cultural itineraries,

valuable natural environments and typical landscapes (in terms of the European Convention on the Landscape). This cultural environment can not be territorially limited - its territorial coverage depends on the logic of cultural-historical processes of the local, national, regional or continental level. It is necessary to underline the crucial importance of cultural routes in the historic area. They have a junction role of cultural infrastructure in the territory, express its thematic richness and realize its cultural cohesion - thus substantially contribute to its integration capabilities. "(Krastev, 2009)¹

The concept for the *Road* was developed with the inclusion of Santiago de Compostela in the World Cultural and Heritage List in 1993 and the subsequent meeting of experts in Madrid (1994) on topic "Roads as an integral part of our cultural heritage." Positive role in this respect was played by UNESCO, through a series of projects for roads, launched at the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997) and more precisely through the program "Roads of Dialogue".

In this optics, according to the mentioned author, roads reflect the role of the culture for exchange, for territorial cohesion and for understanding between communities as well as for their sustainable development. On the other hand, that specificity is associated with those features of modern tourism, based on increasing mobility, which does not recognize borders. On this common basis, the concept's evolution for the "Roads of Dialogue" manifests two key concepts: cultural routes and cultural corridor.

Early realization of the idea of cultural routes can be seek in 1984 when the Council of Europe issued recommendation, regarding the European pilgrim routes, urging all member states to encourage their establishment. Several years later, in October 1987 was launched a program "Cultural Routes of the Council

¹ Krastev T, 2009, in the same

of Europe" with the developing of the first European cultural route *Santiago de Compostela* Pilgrim Routes- a World Heritage Site.

Santiago de Compostela is the main city of the autonomous Spanish region of Galicia, near the Atlantic coast of Spain. In the local stately cathedral, where are held the relics of the Apostle James, end the famous ' Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes". Here, in a richly illustrated manuscript of the XII century, are described the basic facts about the importance of the cult to the saint whose tomb gathers tens of thousands of Christians from all corners of the Earth. Along with the descriptions of the numerous miracles, located in many places across the European continent, the manuscript contains whole chapters dedicated to the pilgrimage routes to Compostela. It is believed that since they were established in the Middle Ages, they had played a crucial role in the development of European culture. On its long way to Compostela, the pilgrims come across diverse cultures, customs and manners and returned to their homelands with a remarkable knowledge for this time. "The Route" experienced, different dimensions on its own - educational, cultural and character - shaping. (Georgieva, 2007) ¹ Nowadays, the routes to Compostela cover almost the whole territory of Europe.

Ten years after the implementation of the program „Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, " in 1997 in Luxembourg was established the European Institute of Cultural Routes. This became on the basis of an agreement between the Council of Europe and the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. The

buildings, which house the institute are also part of one of the existing European cultural route. The main purpose of the Institute establishment was operational implementation of the European Council Program in this field..

In the next year, the Council of the European Ministers, adopted Resolution (98) 4 - an extremely important document, with a great importance for the further realization of the idea of cultural routes in practice.

Several years later, in 2002 was launched the website of the European Institute of Cultural Routes. Developing the idea of a continuous, open to improvement system in today's life. On the website are publicized all documents and links with numerous specializing sites in this field. As a result of the efforts, at the present time the European Institute of Cultural Routes in Luxembourg has partners in almost all countries in Europe including in Bulgaria.

An important place in clarifying some theoretical and methodological problems in this area, has played, according to Georgieva (2007), the organized within celebrations of the twenty years of the European cultural routes European Conference in Puy-en-Velay, a municipality in central France. The situated in the city cathedral "Notre-Dam du Puy" is recognized as a World Cultural Heritage and is part of the Santiago de Compostela Routes in France. Within the conference was adopted Resolution SM/ Res (2007) 12 for the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, which replaced the previous Resolution (98)4

According to this document, the European Cultural Routes reflect the ideas of the European Community: a common, shared heritage, a dialogue between various cultures through expression of the relations that they rally; preservation of the heritage as a resource for economic and cultural development; sustainable development of the cultural tourism.

¹ Georgieva D.,2007, European cultural routes, Program of the Council of Europe, Regional Forum "Trans-Balkan Cultural Corridor Greece-Bulgaria-Romania: a shared heritage and common European future", http://seecorridors.eu/filebank/file_330.pdf,Plovdiv,s. 1-6

On this logic are based the requirements defined in the Annex of the Resolution for Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe. To obtain such certificate, according to Georgieva (2009)¹ a route must possess certain characteristics:

► a Cultural Route should be organized around a main theme (or sub-theme- a specific aspect of the topic) which is approved by the Council of Europe and provides common European values, typical for several European countries.

► a Cultural Route should encourage the creation of long-term, multidisciplinary projects for cultural routes within the five established by the Council of Europe priority areas for action:

- Research developments;
- Promotion of memory, history and European heritage;
- Cultural and educational exchanges of young Europeans;
- Contemporary cultural and artistic practices;
- Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development.

► a Cultural Route should also be managed by specially formed for the project authorities for cooperation, respectively institutionalized

Today, European Cultural Routes are with an established value, which manifests the shared European heritage, tracing the history of certain peoples, the migrations and the spread of the European civilization. They follow the historical roads or (in certain cases), contemporary communication links in accordance with the objectives of sustainable cultural tourism. It is emphasized that the status of the

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, enhances the abilities of the relevant route in the field of cultural tourism, enhances its tourist attractiveness and contributes for its sustainable development. European cultural routes now form a network of 24 operative cultural routes, awarded with a certificate by the Council of Europe. They are a solid basis for the development of a concrete projects for cultural tourism. (Georgieva, 2009)²

The cultural corridors, in contrast to the cultural routes can not always be identified with a specific, materially determinate communication path, which includes historic way. The Cultural Corridor is more of a historical trend, a territorial axis formed in the time on which traditionally has movement and exchanges, a common space of dialogue between countries and regions. Usually the cultural corridor occurs based on a real historic road. For example, the genesis of cultural corridors in Southeastern Europe: Via Egnatia, Via Pontika, the Diagonal Istanbul- Edirne Plovdiv-Sofia-Belgrade and others is in the ancient roads in the region. In the process of evolution, their original substance gradually disappeared, the initial ways had been transformed, but were preserved the authentic territorial directions of the ancient roads. It was preserved the continuity of their objectives and functions for intercultural dialogue and exchange in the region. Substance was gone, but the structure was preserved. As is for the evolution of a historic town its substance may be transformed, but to be preserved its urban structure as a cultural heritage.(Krastev,2009)

The second important difference between the concepts of cultural corridor and cultural route, according to the mentioned author is that the cultural corridor should not be associated with a single determined objective, with only one function or a theme. The Cultural Corridor has many dimensions, it is multifunctional

¹ Georgieva D.,2009, Opportunities for the development of European networks on the basis of European cultural routes in the Electronic Edition Liter Net, 05.06.2009, Cultural Heritage: Education – Science – Preservation – Integrated in Tourism (Heritage: ESPRIT), **under the** total revision of Professor, Doctor of Architect Sciences, Architect T.Krastev

² Georgieva D.,2009, in the same

and polythematic. The historical trend serves over the time of many purposes related to the exchange and dialogue. The author points out that the third important difference evolve from the fact that the cultural corridors include in their historical aura the cultural and historical sites that are related to the whole range of its functions, objectives and themes embodied in the values of a different kind: architectural and archaeological, works of art, cultural landscapes, cultural routes and others. The fourth difference is that the cultural corridors, compared with the cultural routes are in greater degree tied to the contemporary processes of interchange, creativity, cross-cultural interactions and development in a permanent continuity.

It is more than obvious that the cultural roads could be an exclusive phenomenon of the tourism, a field for realization of the desired integration links between culture and tourism. They have an outstanding contribution in forming the cultural tourist products in the historical territories that constitute an integrated set of objects of the cultural and natural heritage along with the diversity of live cultures, cultural events, specific tools for interpretation and marketing, integrated with public infrastructure. This package should posses the quality of sustainability and be able to participate in the tourist market. The Cultural Road, which is in the basis of cultural tourism product, perfectly reflects the role of movement and development in the cultural tourism, which does not comply with borders and is permanently directed to various attractive targets. These tourist values of the cultural roads can be deployed fully within an integrated open network of cultural corridors / routes, treated as a parallel network of existing and interconnected cultural tourist products. (Krastev, 2009) ¹

¹ Krastev, T., 2009, in the same

The considered problems in this article are object of attention in the publications of number of authors, including:

Alzua, O leary and Morrison (1998); Apostolakis (2003); Ashworth (1995); Bachleitner, Reinhard and Zins (1999); Bender and Edmonds (1992); Bendixen (1997); Berry (1996); Bianchini (1999); Briedenhann and Wickens (2004); Bywater (1993); Chang, Milne, Fallson and Pohlman (1996); Richards (1999, 1999a, 1999b, 2000, 2000a, 2002); Robinson, Evans, Callaghan (1996); Silberberg (1995).

From the Bulgarian authors a special merit in clarifying a number of theoretical and methodological issues in this field have Professor, Doctor of Architect Science, Architect T. Krastev (2009) and the led by him groups. The results of their work were published in several prestigious journals in our country or were reported for the purpose of organized scientific conferences. A great proportion of their theoretical deductions are also used in this work.

At this stage, as a result of the positive efforts of the expert groups working in this area, in Southeast Europe were formed the following cultural corridors:

- **Danube Road**
- **Diagonal Road**
- **Eastern Trans-Balkan Road**
- **Sofia-Ohrid Road**
- **Via Adriatica**
- **Via Anatolia**
- **Via Egnatia**
- **Via Pontica**
- **Western Trans-Balkan Road**

Based on the concept for the development of sustainable tourism, the undertaken at the regional forums strategic measures for joint action in Southeast Europe, on this issue and using the achieved in methodically way results in the works of the mentioned authors and foremost the team headed by Prof. T. Krastev, this publication attempts to be launched the idea of creating a conceptual model of water cultural corridor.

The main aims and objectives that are set with a possible future realization of such a cultural corridor can be formulated in the following way:

- **Extending of the good-neighborly relations between countries in Southeast Europe and more specifically between Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece;**
- **Raising the contentedness of the cultural tourism, through the effective use of local resources;**
- **Encouraging the preservation of cultural heritage as an element of the sustainable development;**
- **Promoting of tourist resources of the proposed water corridor among other countries in Europe and the World.**

The main principles on which we based our motivation for creating such a water cultural corridor, meet the objectives of the Sustainable Development Strategy of the European Union (2006), UNESCO Convention on the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage – Paris, 1972 and UNESCO Declaration for the Principles of International Cultural Cooperation (1966);

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the purpose of this research there have been used recognizable observation methods and approaches for data and information collection. Some other sources have been used, provided by the Ministry of Environment and Water, the Directories of Bulgarian National and Nature parks, and all 15 Regional Inspections on Protection of Environment and Water, the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism, the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Executive Forest Agency, research publications from international scientific forums, dedicated to biodiversity and protected areas, as well as a series of publications of Bulgarian and foreign authors. The analysis is conducted and

the results have been established by the means of comparative and analytical approaches. Last, but not least personal observations in some of the protected areas have been undertaken. The working methods that have been used for the purpose of this research include description, diagnosis, analysis and synthesis, comparison, statistical and expert methods.

NATURE OF METHODS:

1. Descriptive and diagnostic methods have been used to establish the state of the subject of study;
2. Methods of comparison have been used with the aim to determine and compare the state of the subject of study at national and global level;
3. Methods of analysis and synthesis allow to be established the common features, characterizing the examined process. They have been used to facilitate management decision-making;
4. Statistical methods based on collective approaches allow examination of the registered problems, establishment of the main trends in their development and creation of prognoses and managerial solutions;
5. Expert methods have been used to identify the main problems, to develop prognoses and to provide management decisions as well as to undertake specific guidelines, recommendations and measures.

This methodology is aimed at identifying the actual status of the problems in Bulgaria and other countries and establishing development trends, concerning the level of sustainability. They in turn serve as a basis for the further maintenance, management, and conservation of protected areas as well as for expanding of the existing opportunities for international cooperation in this field.

3. Results and Discussion

As was already mentioned, the purpose of this work is to build a conceptual model of a water cultural corridor in the coastal areas of Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece.

This prototype of an aquatic cultural corridor includes World Heritage Sites as well as those, which have an unique character for the visited country. The development of such a network for cultural exchange, has set high goals that may become feasible through launching into joint actions in tourism.

The stated of the annual forums's willingness for cooperation between the Southeastern European countries, puts Bulgaria in a very advantageous position. It is the bridge of partnership that can unite the two opposites and connect the ideas of the community within one. A common water corridor, a common cultural framework, a common tourist product are the objectives, implementation of which will help transform this part of Southeast Europe in a desired tourist destinations.

The pilot water, cultural corridor connecting the Black Sea-the Sea of Marmara-the Aegean Sea- the Sea of

Crete –The Mediterranean Sea-The Ionian Sea starts at Cape Shabla, continues through Cape Kaliakra and the port city of Varna (Odessos), Bulgaria, to the south in Istanbul, Turkey, going through the Bosphorus into the Sea of Marmara and through the Dardanelles in the Aegean Sea. The corridor passes through Çanakkale (Dardanelya) and the Greek island of Lemnos. After it directs to the Northeast Greece, descending to the Northern coast of the Aegean Sea and reaches the Halkidiki peninsula and the Gulf of Thessaloniki. Down to the East coast of Greece, the corridor crosses the Aegean Sea to the island of Chios, when it makes its way to Turkey and the Mytilene strait, down to the Gulf of Izmir and southly to Aydin. At Samos, the corridor again penetrate into a Greek territory, and then heads toward the Dodecanese, island of Crete and the Cyclades, reaches the Saronic Gulf and the Peloponnesus, toward the Argolic Gulf and ends to the West Ionian coast of Greece, where the island of Corfu (Kerkyra) is.



The so-called corridor *Aqua Balkanika* represents the way of life of the local population, directly related to the sea, their cults and deities, embodied in the age-old sites of the cultural heritage.

The corridor begins at cape Shabla, passes through the natural and archeological reserve Kaliakra and

reaches Varna - the marine capital of Bulgaria. A city with an ancient history, preserved the spirit of many civilizations

and cultures, the center of marine tourism. Here can be seen the Necropolis of Varna (dating back to V millennium B.C.) with the oldest gold treasure found in Europe, the Roman Baths, the Cathedral "Assumption of Mary "(from the beginning of XX century) and many other churches and mosques. The city includes also modern tourist attractions such as the Varna Archaeological Museum, Naval Museum, Aquarium with 17 large marine pools, Varna Dolphinarium and the Sea Garden. Near the city is situated the Medieval rock monastery Aladja Monastery (13c.) and the national monument of garden and park art- the palace "Euxinograd".

Throughout the *Aqua Balkanika* is Nessebar (Messemvria), one of the oldest cities in Europe, which occurred more than 3200 years ago as a Greek polis. It includes objects from the Middle Ages and the Modern Times. With numerous churches (42) it is inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The most famous churches, which can be seen here are: "Basilica of the Holy Mother of God Eleusa"(6th century), "St. John the Baptist" a church from 11 century, "St. Demetrius" (from 11 century), the Church of " St John Aliturgetos" from 14th century, " Holy Archangeles Michael and Gabriel" (13th century), the Church of "St. Paraskeva" (13th century), the Church "St. Sophia" (the Old Bishopric) from 5th-6th century, the Church of " St. Stephen" (the New Bishopric from 11th century), "The Church of Christ Pantocrator" (13th century), the Church of "St. Theodore " (13th century); the Church of St Spas (17th century), "St. Clement" a church from 17th century and The Church "Virgin Mary (Assumption Virgin)" an active church from 1873. Other tourist attractions in the town are the old windmill (from 18th c.) and more than fifty traditional wooden houses. Because of its unique natural and cultural assets, from different ages, in 1983 the Ancient City of Nessebar was included in the World Cultural Heritage List.

Moving in the time periods, *Aqua Balkanika* reveals the sights of the Greek colony Pomorie (Anchialos) founded in the late (5th century B.C.). It is a town with unique salt waters and century-old traditions in mud treatment. Here is the Ramsar site "Complex Pomorie" including Lake Pomorie and the mouth of River Aheloy, a super-salty lagoon with an area of 760.80 ha; The Museum of Salt; the Male Orthodox Monastery "St. George"; the Architectural reserve "Old Houses of Pomorie", the Mud baths - treatment with mud from Lake Pomorie, the Church of the "Transfiguration of Our Lord " (18th century); the Church "St. Nativity of the Virgin " (19th century) and the Thracian domed tomb.

Down the west coast *Aqua Balkanika* passes through the city of Bourgas (Pyrgos) including the Orthodox churches "St. St. Cyril and Methodius", the Orthodox Church "St. John of Rila ", the Orthodox Church "St. Virgin "; the Orthodox Church "St. Athanasius"; the Orthodox Church "St. Trinity Church" and the Armenian Apostolic Church "St. Hach".

The last object of Bulgaria, part of this aquatic cultural corridor, is Sozopol (Apollonia Pontica) the most ancient city on the Bulgarian coast, abundant in cultural attractions such as: the Architectural and Archaeological Reserve Ancient Sozopol, Thracian tombs and castles, Ancient cemeteries, Fortresses from 4th century, the ancient chapels: "St. Athanasius", "St. Demetrius" "St. Nicholas, "St. Sunday", "St. Marina", " Jesus Christ "and " The Ascension ", the churches: "St. George", "St. Zosim" and the three-nave apse pseudo-basilica of "St. Virgin" from 15th century, a cultural monument under UNESCO's protection.

The corridor continues to the Bosphorus connecting the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara, where is situated the historical and cultural core - Istanbul (Byzantium, Constantinople). Here can be seen the remarkable sites of the city part of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage like Topkapı Palace (Topkapı Sarayı),

Hagia Sophia (Aya Sofya) – a Church returned into a mosque after the destruction of Byzantium by the Ottoman Turks, now a museum; the Bulgarian Iron Church “St. Stephen”, the market Kapali çarsha (Kapalı Çarşı), “Sultan Ahmed Mosque” known as the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, “Dolmabahçe Palace” (Dolmabahçe Sarayı), “Beylerbey Palace”, “Yerebatan Sarnıcı” the museum, which stores the famous stone head of the gorgon Medusa, the Genoa “Galata Tower” (Galata Kulesi), and “Kız Kulesi” Tower.

The port of Çanakkale is the next spot to the cultural attractions- the Sedyulbah Medieval Castle and the Ancient Troy (Ilium). A place retold the first contact between the civilizations of Anatolia and the Mediterranean world, a mythical city described in "The Iliad" as the scene of the Trojan War.

Entering into the Aegean Sea and the marine territory of Greece, the water corridor stops in the first cultural object behind the Turkish boarder – the Aegean settlement Poliohni on the island of Lemnos. It is one of the most important ancient sites from the Prehistoric Era, which has preserved the memory of the great culture of its inhabitants. In Poliohni can be seen the remains of stone houses, squares and fortified walls, wells, roads and public buildings- an example of the earlier democracy of the prehistoric city.

North of the island, towards Alexandroupoli are located the Christian religious centers of the Middle Ages. The remains of the monastery and the church “Panagia Kosmosotira” in the town of Feres and the monastery in Sinaksi Maronea. On the island of Thassos is situated another Christian monastery- "Archangel Michael". Today, from the monastery can be seen the church of the Modern Times, the guest rooms, the monks' cells, the chapels: “St. Gerasimus” and “St. Ephraim ” and one of the nails with which Jesus was crucified.

Aqua Balkanika continues westwards of Tasos, to the Halkidiki peninsula, where

meets the Greek monastic community of Athon (The Holy Mountain). There are 20 monasteries, on its territory, of which one Serbian – The Helandariou Monastery, one Bulgarian- The Zografou Monastery and one Russian [Agiou Panteleimonos Monastery](#). The other sovereign monasteries are: The Great Lavra monastery ; The Vatopedi monastery; The Iviron monastery; The Dionysiou monastery ; The Koutloumousiou monastery ; The Pantokratoros monastery; The Xiropotamou monastery; The Dochiariou monastery; The Karakalou monastery ; The Filotheou monastery ; The Simonos Petras monastery; The Agiou Pavlou monastery ; The Stavronikita monastery; The Xenophontos monastery; The Osiou Grigoriou monastery ; The Esphigmenou monastery and The Konstamonitou monastery.

In the West, the corridor enters in the Gulf of Thessaloniki and the established in the 4th century city Salonika (Thessaloniki). One of the most famous sights of the city is the White Tower (Λευκός Πύργος). Others are The Arch of Galerius, The Church “St. Demetrius”, The Rotunda “St. George”, the Church “St. David “, The Square “St. Sofia” and The Square "Aristotelis". West of Thessaloniki, the corridor stops at the archaeological site of Vergina, the first capital of Ancient Macedonia - Ege (Αίγαι). Here was discovered the alleged tomb of Philip II and the Ancient Macedonian symbol- The Star of Vergina. In close proximity to the mentioned ancient site is Barbouta of Veroia (Veria). Barbouta is a Jewish neighborhood that represents the vernacular architecture of modern times. The Church “St. Anthony”, The Mosque “Madrasah” and the clock tower are the other cultural sites, part of the ancient city of Veroia..

Descending on the West coast of the Aegean Sea, the corridor reaches the mythical Mount Olympus and the ancient town of Dion, where are found many places of worship. Here are discovered varied buildings from different periods,

shops, a large number of workshops built in neighborhoods, streets, public baths, stone inscriptions, the villa of Dionysus (Zeus), with Greek and Roman theaters and a stadium. Among the sanctuaries are these devoted to Zeus, Demeter (from the 4th century), Aphrodite, and several sanctuaries of the Egyptian deities Serapis, Isis and Anubis.

The corridor continues in a southerly direction when crosses the Aegean Sea and reaches to the next medieval religious site. This is the Greek island of Chios and the monastery Nea Moni part of the World Heritage Site “ Monasteries of Daphni, Hossios Loukas and Nea Moni of Chios”. “Although geographically distant, these three monasteries (the first is in Attica, near Athens, the second in Phocida near Delphi, and the third on an island in the Aegean Sea, near Asia Minor) belong to the same typological series “(Cultural Corridors of South East Europe).

From the island of Chios, in the northeast direction, *Aqua Balkanika* enters into the Mytilene strait. In Turkey is the ancient settlement Ayvalik, which has preserved the Hellenic, the Roman and the Byzantine cultures. Here can be see the church Taksiarhis (1844) and numerous stone houses. South of the village is Bergama and the Asclepion, a medical center devoted to the god of the healers Asclepius. On the territory of the complex, are located the swimming pools and fountains used for healing, as well as the Roman Theater. Continuing further south, the corridor reaches the Gulf of Izmir and Ephesus, the legendary Ionian city, which has preserved the rich history of many cultures. Among the monuments of the ancient site are the Temple of Artemis - one of the Seven Wonders of the World, the Agoras, the Theatre, the Marble Road, the Celsus Library, the Terrace Houses, the Church of St. John and Isa Bey Mosque.

Hauling down the west coast of Turkey, *Aqua Balkanika* reaches Aydin and the city of Miletus. Miletus was an important center of the Ionian commerce

and culture. Today in it can be seen Hellenistic and Roman monuments including the Stoa, the Bouleuterion, the Theatre, the Gymnasion, Roman baths and the Nymphahion, Ilyas Bey Mosque represents the Islamic architecture on these lands. Near Miletus is Aphrodisias with monuments from the Ionian and Roman period- the Temple of Aphrodite, the Theatre, Baths of Hadrian, the Agora, the Basilica and the Stadium.

The corridor leaves the boundaries of Turkey and enters in Greek territory in the island of Samos. The island was a center of the Ionian and Aegean culture. Now here can be seen the ruins of the ancient port Pythagoreion and the most important temple devoted to Hera – the Heraion.

Entering into the Dodecanese, the corridor stops on the island of Patmos, which was included in the UNESCO List with the monastery “St. John the Theologian” and the Cave of the Apocalypse, then follows Rhodes with its beautiful urban ensembles of the Gothic. Rhodes homed one of the Seven Wonders of the World—the bronze statue [Colossus of Rhodes](#) (280 BC). “[Historical sites on the island of Rhodes include the Acropolis of Lindos, the Acropolis of Rhodes, the Temple of Apollo, ancient Ialysos, ancient Kamiros, the Governor's Palace, Rhodes Old Town \(walled medieval city\), the Palace of the Grand Masters, Kahal Shalom Synagogue in the Jewish Quarter, the Archeological Museum, the ruins of the castle of Monolithos, the castle of Kritinia and St. Catherine Hospice.](#)”
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhodes>

The island of Crete (Κρήτη) is a place where the ancient history of the Minoan civilization is kept. In the Northern part of the island is the legendary palace of King Minos of Knossos, the Mycenaean script of 14th century BC., The Royal Villa and other artifacts associated with the different civilizations inhabited it. The traces of the Mycenaean and the Roman cultures can be found in the sanctuaries of Glaukos and Demeter, the Chamber tombs, the

north necropolis, the defense towers and the "Villa of Dionysos". In the North West part of Crete can be seen the longest in Europe gorge of Samaria.

In North, the corridor enters in the island group of Cyclades (Kiklades), including the cultural and natural heritage sites of:

- *Santorini Island* with the prehistoric settlement of Akrotiri, of which can be seen the ruins of the urban buildings with magnificent wall-paintings and elaborate drainage system, furniture and vessels, indicating the great development and prosperity of this place.

- *Island of Naxos* and the medieval Tower of Glezos, used as a protective fortress of Sanoudos in Chora;

- *Island of Delos* is the the smallest of the Cyclades, which is related to the legend of the place where Leto gave birth to twins Artemis and Apollo, a small area with many works of art - the Terrace of the Lions (7th century BC), the Minoan Fountain, the Establishment of the Poseidoniasts from Beirut, The Stoivadeion-temple of Dionysos, The Temple of Isis and the Temple of Hera.

- *Island of Tinos* north of the island of Delos, was called "the island of art and beauty" because of its natural richness and cultural phenomena of which are the Tinian house and the beautifully decorated dovecotes.

- *The Island of Sifnos* has many cultural sites from the Antiquity, Medieval and Modern Times. One can see the Medieval houses of the lower class, the Kastro castle, the windmills, many monasteries and churches, of which Panaghia Aggeloktisti in Katavati, the Monastery of Prophet Elijah the Tall, Monastery of Chrisostomos in Kato Petali, Panaghia ta Gournia in Pano Petali, Aghios Antipas in Pano Petali, Aghios Konstantionos in Artemonas, Panaghia tis Ammou and Panaghia Koghi in Artemonas, Panaghia Eleousa in Castro, the Monastery of Panaghia Poulati,

Panaghia tou Vounou, the Monastery of Panaghia of Chrisopigi.

Northwest of Sifnos, in the region Attica, is the Sanctuary of Poseidon and Athena at Sounion. The proves about the cult of the two deities, that were worshiped here are found at the southern edge where the temenos of Poseidon was situated, and about 500 m. to the North of it, where the sanctuary of Athena was established.

In the same region is also situated the capital of Greece Athens. Among the landmarks of the city are the Acropolis of Athens, dating from the Mycenaean Age (II millennium BC.), the Parthenon, the temple of the virgin goddess Athena, the Temple of Hephaestus, the Temple of Zeus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World- the temple Erechtem and some buildings from the Modern Times- the Greek Parliament, the National University of Athens, the National Library "Vallianios "and the Academy of Athens. Annual ly the capital attracts millions of tourist all around the world.

In the South West of the capital is situated the defensive settlement in Ydra. Ydra was well developed during the later years of the 18th because of its nautical power.

In the Argolic Gulf is the World Heritage Archaeological Site of Troy, with the sanctuary of Asclepius and the Theater, considered to be one of the greatest masterpieces of the ancient Greek architecture dating from the 4th century BC.

Nearby is situated another World Cultural Heritage Site- The Archeological sites of Mycenae and Tiryns, with the ruins of the cities of the Mycenaean civilization (XV to the XII century BC). Here are the Lion Gate, the Treasury of Atreus, The Mycenae grave circle and frescoes from Tiryns. In Nauplion, located in the same bay, can be seen the Medieval Mediterranean buildings, churches and mosques, as well as the two baroque castles.

Southwest of the bay, in the slopes of Mt. Taygetos, southern Peloponnese, is the Byzantine city of Mystras with Medieval palaces, The Monastery of Our Lady Pantanassa, The Cathedral of St. Demetrios and the ancient, warlike Police of Sparta.

Entering into the Ionian Sea, on the West coast of the Peloponnese, the corridor reaches the first Greek site inscribed into UNESCO World Heritage List- the [Temple of Apollo Epicurius at Bassae](#), which combines the Ionic, Doric and Corinthian architectural styles. To the North is the archaeological site Olympia with ancient Olympia, where the Olympic games were created.

The corridor continues in a northerly direction to the state border of Greece with Albania and finishes to the island Corfu (Kerkyra). The island is associated with the Greek mythology and the adventure of god Poseidon, who fell in love with Kerkira and abducted her to the hitherto unnamed island. In an expression of his love, Poseidon called the island Corfu (in Greek, Kerkyra).

The realization of this ideological project, will highlight "the special role that the water element played in the development and the diffusion of culture in South East Europe." (Regional Forum Greece 2008., Cultural Corridors of South East Europe), will stimulate the cultural tourism, which in turn will become united and developed power for the countries in the region.

The strategy for Sustainable Development of *Aqua Balkanika* is guided by the activities of stakeholders, defining the priorities of tourism. According to Draganov (2007) on national level two stages can be implemented - a political mandate and the situation analysis. In the first one, the author includes ensuring commitment of all stakeholders to formulate and implement a strategy and plan for sustainable development in the area, based on shared vision and identity and determination of the organization

leading the process and the terms of the activities.

The situation analysis includes collection of data and compilation of the existing level of tourism, the number of enterprises, employment, visitors of tourist facilities and services, environmental conditions, the respective contribution of tourism to the local economies. To be realistic these data, the author, proposes to be assessed the resources of cultural and natural heritage, including the conditions and sensitivity for future use; to be assessed the capacity of tourism infrastructure, involvement of local communities and businesses by exploring the profile, needs and the customer satisfaction. The emphasis on evaluation should fall on the external factors, the existing policies and instruments, the effectiveness of the existing partnerships and identifying of measures for overcoming the barriers to greater interaction. (Draganov, 2007)¹

In this context, we realize the future actions taken by the Forum in Greece, which became a strategic for the development of *Aqua Balkanika* as follows:

- **Establishing a coordinated regional policy for cultural tourism in the water corridors.** For the creation of an open system for cultural exchange is needed primarily to overcome the political boundaries between the three countries. The removal of visa restrictions and facilitate the movement throughout the water corridor are the expected measures which need to be taken for the future development. In addition is anticipated to be enhanced cooperation at the highest political level and to be improved the overall tourism infrastructure. Financing the development of various tourist areas should also be considered, because these particular sites appear to be attractive, they have to be stimulated. It has to be

¹ Draganov R., 2007, Sustainable cultural tourism in the Trans-Balkan Cultural Corridor, in http://seecorridors.eu/filebank/file_329.pdf, p.4-5

realized the benefits of attracting investments in this specific part of tourism.

- **Engaging travel agencies in promoting of the cultural product-** a determining role in the development of the tourist product has the tourist agencies operating within the three countries. Their commitment to the promotion of the tourist product is the best advertisement for the community. Promoting *Aqua Balkanika* will strengthen its cultural power in the global network of cultural corridors, which in turn will make the future tourists more acquainted with the values of heritage. Thus, the travel agencies will occupy the interested and winning party, stimulating the global cultural exchange.

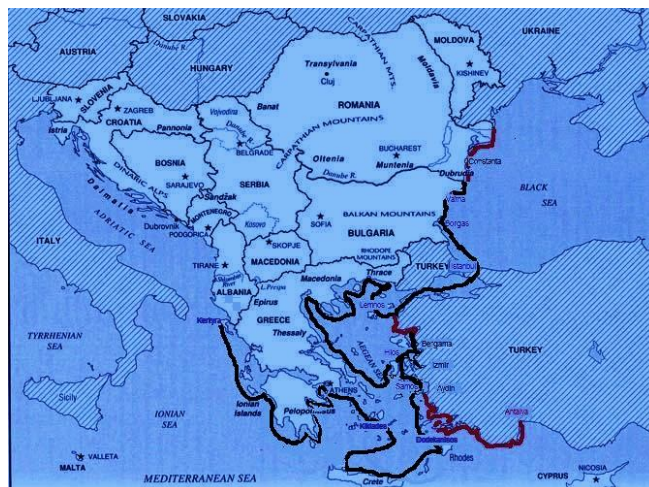
- **Establishing an educational network for teaching of heritage, covered by this water corridor-** This action will aim, through various forms of communication, to be established a network for exchange of knowledge and experience. To attract people's interest in cultural heritage, included in the corridor various forms of its diffusion will be promoted. Like creating a website for water cultural corridors similar to that of the *Cultural Corridors of South East Europe*, organizing youth programs for

cultural exchange between countries, school educational programs and everything that can contribute to be built a new, complete vision of the inheritance.

At this stage, were studied the Cultural Heritage Sites of Turkey and those located along the Romanian Black Sea coast, but their realization as destinations of the water corridor *Aqua Balkanika* remains in the future development of the corridor. In it may also be included organizing visits during various festivals and fairs related to the intangible cultural heritage of marine destinations. Possible future extensions of the corridor include adding the sites of:

Romania: The Natural site Danube Delta- one of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites and Histria - Greek, Roman and Byzantine city in Constanta

Turkey: The object of the cultural and natural heritage Hiarapolis-Pamukkale, the sacred center Didyma with the temple of Apollo, the Aegean port of Halicarnassus(Bodrum), the Bodrum Castle, the vernacular architecture of Mugla, World Cultural and Natural Heritage Xantos-Letoon and the ancient city of Myra.



4. CONCLUSIONS:

From the study made in the article can be drawn the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. Using scientific and methodical performances of the team led by Prof. Dr. Arch. T. Krastev (1999) in this work was made an initial attempt to be refined a new cultural corridor called *Aqua Balkanika*. It passes through Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece, and connects various different historical layers of the most ancient monuments to the values of the Modern times, including also the extremely valuable architectural and ethnographic complexes.

2. The structure of the offered cultural corridor, suggests in the further steps of the studies to determine the historical axis of movement, dialogue and exchange of information and also the area of influence of the cultural corridor. Of great importance is the fact that in this part of Southeast Europe, there are great number of sites recognized as

World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which pose a serious resource for the development of cultural tourism.

3. It is necessary to develop, clear and precise strategy for management of activities associated with further development of cultural tourism along the Aqua Balkanika. To become a reality the proposed waterway corridor is necessary to construct mechanisms for partnership and cooperation structures, for conservation and sustainable development of the corridor, with the participation of local authorities, tourist business, academia, etc.

4. The proposed cultural corridor would be realized only if there is a clear and precise strategy for its identification and also for its sustainable development and conservation.

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