



# Iron Curtain Trail

WP4 Sustainable Tourism Offers

## **Cycling through the valleys and gorges of the Iron Gate**

Proposed Transnational Tourism Package: Bucharest  
(Romania) to Sofia (Bulgaria)

19/11/2014



## **Description**

We envisage a package proposal from the Romanian capital, Bucharest to Sofia, the Bulgarian capital. The distance along the ICT route of this section is approximately 300km long. The duration of the final package should be no longer 9 days.

## **Selection procedure**

Initially, the proposals were mapped based on the itinerary outlined in the submissions. It was observed that there was a concentration of proposals along this section of the ICT. The diversity of the submissions as well as their geographic distribution means that these proposals present an ideal opportunity for transnational cooperation. A classification of the submissions was made based on whether they constituted a touristic or a transport offer. Here, we focus on the touristic offers. It was also noted whether the proposals designated a specific operator and whether the proposals were at an idea stage or at a realisation stage.

Subsequently, the proposals were grouped into sections that presented good potential for transnational packages. The criteria for making these sections were recognisability of destinations, feasibility of distances, accessibility and quality of infrastructure. Together these criteria provided a suitable indication of market appeal.

## **Level of Cooperation**

Here, we aim to incorporate the various tours that have been proposed into one offer. Modifying the original proposals to maximise complementarity or continuity can be envisaged. This comes under the third and highest level of cooperation that have been previously outlined.



## Section Outline

### Highlights

- Iron Gate Dam – Danube River
- Capitals – Bucharest and Sofia
- Stara Planina Nature Park – Balkan Mountains (Serbia)

### Connections

Both Sofia and Bucharest are well connected with international airports connecting them to the major cities of Europe. They are also well connected by rail to the rest of the country.

### The offer

This section features two major European capitals and presents good potential for a transnational package. There is currently only one tourism proposal that offers a guided tour (see table below) and two transport offers. These are individually strong offers but the major problem of this section is the lack of cover of the tourism proposals for cyclists. In order to create an attractive offer, the partners will have to propose further accommodation and attractions along the way. The price of this package should be around €800 and include 8 nights half-board, including in Bucharest and Sofia. Transport between the ICT and the capitals should be included in that price as well as bicycle rental. A

Partner	Name	Start	Stop
<b>ERDF PP10</b>	5 – Iron Package	(Bucharest) Orsova (ROM)	Dubova (ROM)
<b>ERDF PP11</b>	1 – Along the Iron Curtain in the Balkan Peninsula	Vidin (BGR)	Blagoevgrad (BGR)
<b>ERDF PP5</b>	13 – Sofia - Dragoman <i>train-bus service</i>	Sofia (BGR)	Dragoman (BGR)

possible tour operator is Odysseia-in Ltd., from proposal 1 (see table).

It is the section between Dubova (Romania) and Vidin (Bulgaria) that is problematic. There is good potential to incorporate an attraction that features the Danube River. While it is true there are dams along this part of the Danube, it would be worth exploring whether a section could be done by boat. It should



also be seen whether the length of the transport proposal linking to Bucharest would not be too much of a deterrent.

### Target market

Both its accessibility and the fact that both destinations are internationally recognisable means that this package is likely to appeal to tourists across Europe. It is also likely to interest tourists from the countries which this section of the ICT goes through will.

### **Next step**

This stage will require a close collaboration between partners. The initial proposals will have to be adapted to fit the format of the transnational proposal, particularly in terms of price and duration. Technical issues should be identified and a common solution should be proposed. The final product should be a coherent, well defined offer that will appeal to a broad range of tourists. It is not necessary to make the whole section guided but it must be clear what the transport alternatives are for those parts which are not. Public transport alternatives should be outlined, particularly for parts of the ICT that are not covered by a tourism proposal for a long distance (upwards of 40km). Accommodation options also need to be included for the whole length of the section.



