



Iron Curtain Trail

WP4 Sustainable Tourism Offers

Cycling across the Belasica Mountains

Proposed Transnational Tourism Package: Skopje (FYROM)
to Drama (Greece)

19/11/2014

Description

We envisage a package proposal from the Skopje, capital of the FYROM to Drama in Greece via Bulgaria. The distance along the ICT route of this section is approximately 200km. The duration of the final package should be no longer 7 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. 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 tourism packages. The criteria for making these sections were recognisability of destinations, feasibility of distances, accessibility of beginning and end points 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 should be envisaged. The final product comes under the third and highest level of cooperation that have been previously outlined.



Section Outline

Highlights

- Belasica Mountains
- Cities of Skopje, Strumitsa and Drama

Connections

The city of Skopje is well connected at local level through the Macedonian train network and at international level through its international airport. There are two direct trains a day to Thessaloniki (under 5 hours).

Drama is connected to the national Greek rail network. It has a direct train to Thessaloniki (3 hours).

The offer

This section features a European capital, three countries and a scenic route giving it good potential for a transnational tourism package. There is a rich offering of proposals along this section with eleven tourism proposals that offer guided and self-guided tours (see table below) as well as four transport offers. The idea here is that they combine to form a new offer.

Because of the remoteness of the areas this section goes through, full-board accommodation must be provided. The package must also include transport connecting the ICT to Skopje as well as provide the option of renting bicycles. The package should be priced at around €750. There are many possible tour operators, although because of the transport requirement, we suggest that Laguna Travel be involved (proposal 29, see table).

The fact that the whole of this section of the ICT is covered by a previously submitted tourism proposal is an advantage. It is nonetheless advisable to



outline public transport connections between the beginning and end points. Another strength of this section is the variety of proposals and partners.

Target Market

The destinations along this section have international recognition and the route passes through beautiful landscapes. The relatively good connections mean that the final package can appeal to tourists from the region as well as further afield in Central and Western Europe. The route does go through some mountainous terrain and is best suited to a more sports oriented public, its marketing should reflect that.

Partner	Name	Start	Stop
2	Along the Iron Curtain Trail in the Balkan Peninsula (BG-FYROM-GR)	Gotse Delchev (MKD)	Blagoevgrad (BGR)
29	Natural Beauties Bike Tour	Delchevo (MKD)	Strumica (MKD)
30	Cultural Heritage Bike Tour in Strumica Micro Region	Strumika (MKD)	Novo Selo (MKD)
31	Spa and Gastronomy Bike Tour Berovo - Strumica	Berovo (MKD)	Novo Selo (MKD)
26	Belasitsa in a Day	Sandanski (BGR)	Kolarovo (BGR)
27	Belasitsa in Two Countries	Petrich (BGR)	Bankso (GBR)
28	Belasitsa in Three Countries	Petrich (BGR)	Kerkini (GRE)
14	Sandanski - Petrich <i>bus service</i>	Sandanski (BGR)	Petrich (BGR)
3	Along the Iron Curtain Trail in the Balkan peninsula (GR-BG)	Petrich (BGR)	Kirkovo (BGR)
20	Bus services for cyclists in Serres region	Serres (GRE)	Agkistro (GRE)
17	B	Kerkini (GRE)	Agkistro (GRE)
19	Modile Cycling Repair Unit	Serres (GRE)	Drama (GRE)
22	Mini-bus for Cyclists	Serres (GRE)	Drama (GRE)
21	Bus services for cyclists in Drama region	Drama (GRE)	Kato Nevropoki (GRE)
18	Cycling NATURA	Mikro Dereio (GRE)	Kyprinos (GRE)

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 proposals. 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. Both public transport connections along the route and those connecting the ICT to the cities that mark the start and finish of the section should be outlined.



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