



Iron Curtain Trail

WP4 Sustainable Tourism Offers

Cycling from Bulgaria to Turkey along the Iron Curtain Trail

Proposed Transnational Tourism Package: Plovdiv (Bulgaria)
to Edirne (Turkey)

19/11/2014

Description

We envisage a package proposal from the Plovdiv, Bulgaria's second city to Edirne in Turkey, via Greece. The distance along the ICT route of this section is approximately 250km. 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 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. This comes under the third and highest of the levels of cooperation that have been previously outlined.



Section Outline

Highlights

- Arda River
- City of Plovdiv and Edirne (including the impressive Silimiye Mosque)

Connections

The city of Plovdiv is well connected at local level through the national train network and at international level through its international airport. There is a regular direct service to Sofia (3 hours). International services require connections and take a long time.

Edirne is connected to the national Turkish rail network. It has a direct train to Istanbul (4 and a half hours).

There is good road infrastructure between the start and finish destinations, however there is no direct train. A bus connection between the two cities should be referred to in the proposal.

The offer

This section features parts of three countries and two regionally important cities giving it potential for a transnational package. There are four relevant tourism proposals that offer guided and self-guided tours (see table below). Our proposal is that they combine to form a new package offer.

Because of the remoteness of some areas this section, accommodation must be provided full-board. The package must also provide the option of renting bicycles and transport connecting the ICT to Plovdiv. The package should be priced at around €550. The proposed tour operator is the Greenway Social Cooperative Enterprise (proposal 15, 16 & 18, see table).



The fact that most of the section of the ICT is covered by a proposal between these two destinations is an advantage. While some of the areas involved are quite remote, it is nonetheless advisable to outline public transport connections where possible.

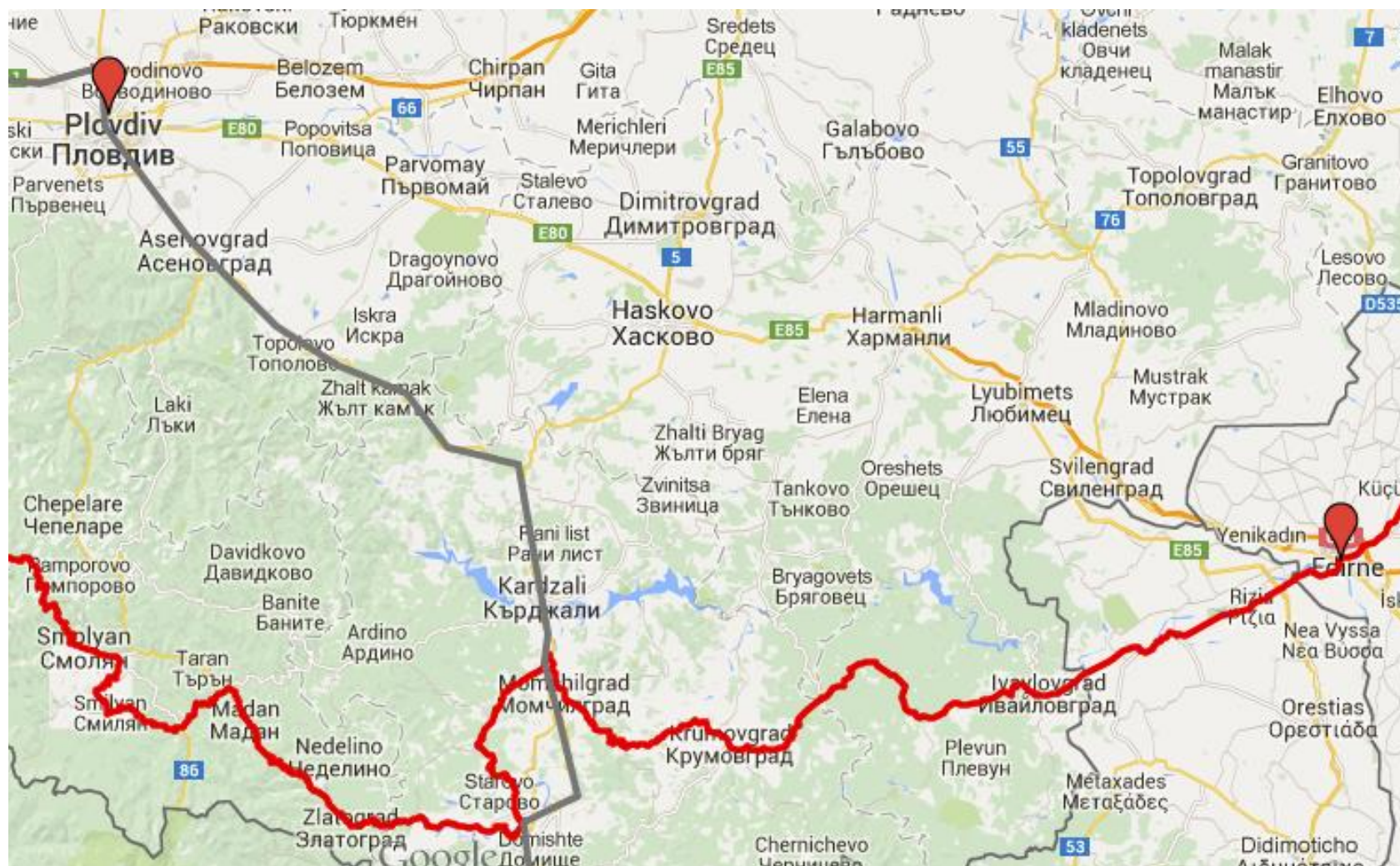
Target Market

Tourists interested in this tourism package are likely to be based in the surrounding area. Bulgarians in particular are likely to be interested in it due to accessibility to it from the cities of Plovdiv and Sofia. International interest may be limited as the destinations along this section have limited international recognition and the international transport connections to Edirne are also limited.

Partner	Name	Start	Stop
ERDF PP6	15 – Cycling along the Forts of the Iron Curtain	Agistro (GRE)	Kastanies (GRE)
ERDF PP6	16 – Cycling Evros	Agistro (GRE)	Kastanies (GRE)
ERDF PP6	18 – Cycling NATURA	Mikro Dereio (GRE)	Kyprinos (GRE)
ERDF PP10	3 – Along the Iron Curtain Trail in the Balkan peninsula (GR-BG)	Petrich (BGR)	Kirkovo (BGR)

Next step

This stage will require a close collaboration between the previously submitted proposals. 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 alternatives that are available along the route as well as those that connect the cities that mark the start and finish of the section should be outlined.





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