



Communication campaign to promote EDEN destinations in Bulgaria
(BG EDEN Campaign III)

**ONLINE BULLETIN
FOR BULGARIAN EDEN DESTINATIONS CREATED FOR THE PROJECT
“COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE EDEN DESTINATIONS IN BULGARIA –
THIRD EDITION”, IMPLEMENTED BY MINISTRY OF TOURISM UNDER THE GRANT
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The on line bulletins developed under the Communication campaign to promote EDEN destinations in Bulgaria (BG EDEN Campaign III) project will introduce to you related project news, interesting events in EDEN destinations as well as presenting the selected in various edition Bulgarian EDEN destinations.

EDEN is the acronym for European Destinations of Excellence - an initiative promoting sustainable tourism development models across the EU.

For more information about EDEN initiative visit <http://www.edenbulgaria.eu/>, as well as the DG GROW website https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/eden/about_en

The project aims to further develop the previous two projects on the same topic, implemented during the 2016-2017 and 2011 – 2012. Its main objectives are to promote the Bulgarian EDEN destinations on national and foreign tourist markets. Up to now Bulgaria has selected the total of 17 destination of excellence during 4 competitions for selection of destination held in 2017, 2010, 2009, 2008 and, namely Yambol, Mezdra, Dragoman, Ardino, Chavdar, Silistra, Lukovit, Sandanski, Kyustendil, Belogradchik, Belitsa, Sapareva Banya, Kavarna, Vratsa, Strandzha, Kazanlak and Kardzhali.

For more information visit: <http://www.edenbulgaria.eu/>



NEWS

SECOND COMPETITION FOR CHILDREN FOR A PAINTING UNDER THE TITLE „MY EDEN DESTINATION IN BULGARIA”

On 27 September 2018 Ministry of Tourism launched a competition for children under the title „My EDEN destination in Bulgaria” as one of the promotional activities of Communication campaign to promote EDEN destinations in Bulgaria (BG EDEN Campaign III) project. Deadline for receiving of the children’s paintings is 27 November 2018.

The competition is opened for participation for children between 7 and 14 years old. The themes of the paintings must be related to one of the listed below EDEN destinations. The paintings shall present the children point of view to the attractions and sightseeing sites located on the territory of the EDEN destination which they present (natural, cultural, historical sites, traditions, events, festivals, etc.). There are 17 EDEN destinations selected up to now in Bulgaria, namely Yambol, Mezdra, Dragoman, Ardino, Chavdar, Silistra, Lukovit, Sandanski, Kyustendil, Belogradchik, Belitsa, Sapareva Banya, Kavarna, Vratsa, Strandzha, Kazanlak and Kardzhali.

The individual view of the participants in the completion discovers sites and places which in our everyday lives we would not notice. This helps to promote the less known, off-the-beaten track tourist destinations and implementing the non-traditional forms of tourism which would impress every tourist.

The results and final ranking of the participants will be ready by 31.12.2018 г.

The announcement and all related participation requirements could be found at <http://www.edenbulgaria.eu/bg/node/83>.



In the second edition of the bulletin there will be presented Bulgarian EDEN destination Dragoman – runner-up destination in the 2017 competition for Cultural tourism

“Little Mount Athos” Dragoman Municipality

Municipality of Dragoman is located 43 km westerly from Sofia and only 16 km away from the Serbo-Bulgarian border. The city is situated in a small alpine area at the bottom of Chepan Mountain (part of the mountain range of Stara Planina).

Unknown Bulgaria – the discovery... “Little Mount Athos” Dragoman Municipality is the place of temple architecture and iconography, spiritual peace, natural beauty and historical narrative.

Visiting “Little Mount Athos” Municipality Dragoman a traveler will immediately fill the peaceful atmosphere embracing the destination with all its cultural and natural sights, places and friendly people. Its name was preciously chosen (“Little Mount Athos”) as there is no other place in Bulgaria where a visitor could explore so many churches and monasteries on such a compact territory (in Dragoman Municipality they are 47). A significant part of these temples dated back in the medieval period and represents the unique Bulgarian traditional ecclesiastical constructive and art traditions from the period. This is the reason why they are declared cultural monuments of national importance.

Cultural and historical heritage

Millennia ago the Thracians dwelt the area and part of their cultural heritage reaching us today is a **Thracian sanctuary of Sabasius-Dionysus**, which could be seen on the Chepun hill. From the highest peak – Petrov krast, you can still see the ruins of an ancient sanctuary dating back in 2nd century BC. Its north wall and parts of the east one were carved into the rock. The inscription of the Roman legionnaire Aurelius Mestrianos says that this place is dedicated to the god Sabazios. A chapel was built on the foundations of the sanctuary during Revival period of Bulgaria.

The importance of the destination was valued even in Roma period when **the Roma road Via Militaris** passing through Dragoman municipality was actively used. It was marked with "milliarted columns" with Latin inscriptions, which indicate the distances between cities, stations and other inhabited sites. There are two columns found on the territory of Dragoman Municipality. One Roman mile equals 1478 meters. Such two columns were found in the Derven region located 6-7 km west of Dragoman. The first column was placed in 244-247, and the second one – between 361-362, probably on road repair. They are currently situated in the central city area of Dragoman.

Burned, ruined and plundered temples along Nishava River resist the time and transmit a history of more than 10 centuries to our days.



One of the most attractive sites is the renovated and restored Medieval Nedelishki Monastery "St. Atanasiy the Great". The monastery used to revitalize and restore the religious and cultural life of the entire Dragoman municipality. In the 19th century, it was the largest monastery in Dragoman area, but years of oblivion followed for it. The sole standing building is the Church "St Atanasiy the Great", which is a large single bodied triapside building with a small nartex shaped by two smaller arches. The stone reliefs incorporated in the southern and western façade of the church depicting saints and mythology beings are very interesting. There are stored the king portals from an older woodworked iconostasis in the church. The first church school in the region was founded in the monastery. It then became class school and existed until the middle of the 20th century. Nowadays the Nedelishki Monastery is completely renewed and this valuable monument of cultural and historical heritage have been made accessible for Orthodox Christians and visitors from the whole country and abroad.

The Church of "St. St. Ap. Peter and Paul" in Berende village is a cultural and historical site of national importance. It was built by a local boyar with the donations of king Ivan Asen II in the middle of the 13th century. The church keeps one of the few complete and perfectly preserved frescoes from the XIV century. The murals were painted by at least three artists, depicting the iconographic image of king Ivan Asen II (the work of an unknown artist). The frescoes in the church are of national significance, with the value of those from the Boyana church, and the church itself was declared an old-style folk art style in SG № 69/1927 and with a protocol of the SOPK dated 07.12.1966 as a cultural monument of national importance. The frescoes of the church "St. Peter and Paul" in Berende are mentioned in many Bulgarian and foreign works for medieval art in the Balkans.

Medieval monastery "St. St. Ap. Peter and Paul" on Chepun hill was founded in the early Middle Ages, when the holy place was inherited from the coming Christians who built the Petropavlov Monastery. It was destroyed in the late Middle Ages when the Turnovo Kingdom fell under Ottoman rule. Subsequently the surviving Christian population placed here a stone cross that is still preserved. They built the church "St. St. Ap. Peter and Paul" on the remains of the antique temple in 19th century. However, this church is destroyed today and only its ruins can be seen up on the hill. A building of a new chapel here was initiated in 2017.

Medieval Church "St. Nicola" in Kalotina village is a cultural monument of national importance. It was built near the Razboishte medieval monastery "St. Blessed Virgin" in the 14th century, probably during the reign of the Bulgarian Tsar Ivan Alexander (1331-1371). Confirmation of the latter comes from inscriptions on the south façade, which were removed in 1947 by the artist Assen Vassilev and are now exposed in the National Archaeological Museum in Sofia. The Church "St. Nicola" was built of cut stones, joint with mortar. The windows have conical shape narrowing towards outside.



Medieval Monastery "St. Nicola" was probably built in the 14th century, however, its architectural features and preserved frescoes dated back to the 16th-17th century. It is partly dug into the terrain, built of stone and covered with stone slabs. "The Court of Justice" scene is best preserved. A frieze with the apostles and a group of angels is preserved from the outer decoration, as well as the image of St. Nicola in the patron niche above the entrance. The colour range includes only light ochre, pale blue and green



Medieval Church "St. Petka" in Berencde Izvor village is a cultural monument of local importance. It is located in a wooded area. Its roof was repaired, the iconostasis was restored, the façade both inside and outside was renovated.

Monastery "St. Petka" in Cheparliatsi village is located on the right bank of the Nishava River. The temple was built in the place of an early Christian sanctuary-consecrated ground, in the foundation of which were found two burial Byzantine stones dating back to 6th-7th century. There is a well of healing water in the church's yard.

Medieval Church "St. Ascension of the Lord" in Vasilovci village which dates back around 10 centuries is a cultural monument of local significance. After 50 years in ruins the church was restored and in May, 13th 2107 it opened door for visitors.



Medieval Church “St. George” in Rayanovtsi village is a cultural monument of local significance, which was restored and renewed in 2017 thanks to donations, sponsors and the local community. After decades of oblivion and destruction, it regained its dignity, beauty and tangible appearance.

Intangible cultural heritage

The **folklore song** of mid-western Bulgaria contains the whole thematic diversity of Bulgarian folklore. This area situated between Stara Planina, Pirin and Serbia flows into the Thracian folklore area to the east. The Shops’ musical folklore is different from that of the other surrounding areas. The cheerful, bold temperament, witty and inventive Shop has created a musical folklore that meets all his characteristics. He is not rich in emotion and melody but impresses us with his ingenuity and creativity. Particularly specific is the double-voice, which with its unique parallel seconds, is one of the most distinguishing features of the area. The song usually ends with similar to the initial exclamations with rich ornamentation. With this melodic development, hundreds of old, joyful and historical songs are singed here, called by the people "kralimarkovski" or "matchmaking" songs. Much of the one-sided songs are the local “po same” songs. These are mostly “sedenkarski” songs, which are of special honour here.

Festivals and attractions

The destination could attract you with not only its tangible cultural heritage, but also with the intangible one. Feel the real emotions of the physically separate but spiritually assembled people who inhabit the border area of West Bulgaria and Eastern Serbia by joining **The International Folklore Festival “Nishavski Horovod”**. The Festival is held annually on May, 24th and 25th and it is conducted simultaneously in two countries – Bulgaria and Serbia with the respective festival centers – Dragoman and Dimitrovgrad. The festival was established in 2001 with the main purpose to keep the interest to Bulgarian traditional folklore alive and to support Bulgarians from both sides of the boarder to represent and to share their intangible cultural heritage and to feel as part of one society. Although these people inhabit two countries, they have their common culture, history and spirit. You could feel the real emotion these people experience during these two days festival only if you visit the event yourself.

International “Bike and Run for Chepun” is a race that causes more and more unforgettable sporting emotions and has constantly grown every next year. The format of the competition includes mountain biking and mountain running during which the athletes can enjoy the amazing revitalizing nature of the region. The main purpose of the competition is to popularize the way of life in harmony with nature, the biking and running as ways of movement, and the Chepun Mountain as a tourist destination close to the Bulgarian capital. Even if it is not for participation, but just to feel the atmosphere of the wonderful experience, the race is worth the visit.

Other interesting event taking place in the region and devoted to the nature is a **Week of Karst Complex „Dragomansko blato“**. In 7 days, children from around the country clean the marsh, play interesting games, do sports, and draw the nature inspired by the biodiversity of the region.



Natural sights



„**Dragoman Marsh** - the only marsh in Bulgaria with a karst origin, which gives it special environmental significance (11th Ramsar site in Bulgaria). Together with the wet meadows from the town of Dragoman to the village of Tsarklevtsi, it has been declared an important ornithological place. Most of the species in and around Dragoman marsh are endemic species for the country and the Balkan Peninsula. Dragoman Marsh and Chepun mountain are designated as representative habitats of European importance for the protection of biodiversity (Programme CORNE Biotopes). Wildlife Association "Balkani" organizes summer volunteer camps in the region of Dragoman Marsh and Chepun Mountain. The Wetland Conservation Centre, located near the marsh, hosts periodically organized educational and informational meetings devoted to the importance of saving the local flora and fauna, which results in saving the worldwide.

Gallery: visit also: <http://www.edenbulgaria.eu/bg/node/52>

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