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- Alternative tourism is a form of tourism which represents an alternative to the conventional mass tourism. Its forms are small-scale, low-density, divided into forms practiced in urban (religious, cultural, business) and rural areas. Alternative tourism is an attempt to preserve, protect and improve the quality of the existing resource base, which is fundamental for tourism itself. Alternative tourism is featured by active encouragement and care for the development of additional andspecific attractions as well the infrastructure, which are based on the local resources, while at the same time aiding the latter. It has an impact on the quality of life in the region, improves the infrastructure and increases the educational and cultural level of the local community.
- 2 Alternative forms of tourism contribute to the economic diversity, focusing on environmental and cultural sustainability. Those forms of tourism do not harm the culture of the host community and are based on natural, social and community values. This allows both the guest and the host to experience positive, meaningful interaction and to share their experiences and cultural specifics. Alternative forms of tourism directly support the local population and the economic diversity.
- Alternative tourism includes cultural, educational, scientific, adventure, business, rural, extreme, agricultural (farm), hunting, wine, hobby, eco, religious, spa, health, sex tourism.
- 4 Alternative tourism as a concept and a form of tourism emerged at the end of the 1970s. Over the last decade it has already acquired considerable "weight" in the tourism industry and became a separate segment of the international tourist market. There was an increasing demand and a trend of "returning" to the original sources of natural and socio-cultural environment.

- 5 Alternative tourism means "new", "different", specialized, not the one that is regarded as common. According to J. Gazes (quoted by PENERLIEV, 2009) alternative tourism develops at three main levels:
- 6 1) socio-cultural and tourist ethics,
- 7 2) economic realism and
- 8 3) protection of the environment.
- According to Jost Krippendorf (quoted by PENERLIEV, 2009) alternative tourism is a kind of dynamic system that is not explained by its component parts, but by the existence of steady mandatory simultaneous real connections between those parts.

Rural tourism

- The term "rural tourism" has different meanings in different countries. In Finland, for example, it is associated with renting farmhouses or provisions supply in remote areas. In Hungary, there is a separate term for rural tourism, which stresses that this type of tourism only includes activities and services offered in rural areas (as we shall see later, agritourism development includes cheap places to stay, but not participation in agricultural activities or other events of local character). In Slovenia, the most important type of rural tourism is that of family farms, where guests stay either in the house of the farmers or in individually designed houses, while visiting farms in order to dine or to make a tour around the farm is also very popular (VERBOL, 1995, quoted by PENERLIEV, 2009). In the Netherlands the rural tourism is mostly camping on farms, as most services are limited to activities which employ trails (cycling, walking and horseback riding). In Greece, the main part of rural tourism consists of providing a bed and breakfast in traditionally furnished rooms or studios, while food mainly consists of homemade dishes. Additional services, which are currently limited, include also restaurants, taverns and cafes or organizing cultural and recreational activities.
- Rural tourism is one of the main tourism sub-types that exhibit a priority development in many European countries, including Hungary. The rural recreation market is growing just at a time when the future of many rural areas is uncertain due to changes in agricultural policy (this was subsequently adopted by the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union) and the increasing attractiveness of urban life. Rural tourism seems to be one of the most appropriate tools of reviving the fading rural areas and of ensuring their future. This is done by maintaining or even increasing the employment, the diversification of jobs, the preservation of services, farms aiding, increasing the number of cultural events, nature conservation or revitalization of rural arts and crafts in order to attract tourists. Rural tourism often provides incentives (and part of the funding needed) for infrastructural development, which in turn contributes to the growth of other economic branches in rural áreas
- Rural areas are characterized by favorable natural resources and climatic conditions. Those are an important prerequisite for the development of multilateral economic activities: agriculture, forestry, industry, tourism etc. The development of (mainly) food and souvenir industry, especially when small and medium enterprises are concerned, is already dependant on the tourism sector in such rural settlements which already offer tourist activities. A process of recovery of important strategic sub-sectors is observed, such as viticulture, cultivation of perennial crops especially strawberries and

raspberries, roses, mint, lavender as well as the development of sericulture and beekeeping. The main task of the municipal administrations is to promote the development of rural tourism and the tourism-related economic activities such as ecological agriculture and animal husbandry, production of souvenirs with motifs of the region (woodcarving, pyrography, pottery, knitting, carpet weaving, nautical-themed souvenirs etc.).

- The compact settlements inhabited by rural communities with preserved strong traditions and identity, along with the well-developed social infrastructure in the past, need renovation and expansion, especially of the existing road network. It is necessary to solve the problems related to ill-maintained or in some cases lacking sewerage systems, water supply and public utilities. In some geographical areas such settlements could become attractive centers for economic development.
- Although there has been a well-developed road infrastructure, but poorly maintained, over the years following 1989 this now represents a huge obstacle for the development of rural tourism. There are many interesting tourist sites that are unknown to foreigners and even to Bulgarians themselves because of poor road network. Many rural areas remain remote and isolated from the major urban centers. Usually the most sought after tourist destinations and rural features are the clean air, the tranquility, the proximity to water bodies and mineral springs, mountains and forests, authentic architecture, the opportunities for sports and open-air activities. Typical examples of that are the villages and small towns which attract tourists such as Trigrad, Momchilovtsi, Arbanasi, Ribaritsa, Voneshta voda, Shipkovo, Chepelare etc.

Spa tourism

- Bulgaria has registered a total of 525 mineral water deposits with over 1.600 mineral springs with a total capacity of 4900 l/sec.
- 16 The national spa resorts can be regionalized as follows:
 - the **Srednogorie zone** where the main spa centers are Hisarya, Pavel banya, Stara Zagora mineral baths, Sliven mineral baths, etc.;
 - the **Rila-Rhodopes zone** Sapareva banya, Dolna banya, Momin prohod, Kostenets, Kyustendil, Velingrad, Narechen, Mihalkovo, Haskovo mineral baths, Ognyanovo, Levunovo, Marikostinovo etc.;
 - the Black Sea coast the seaside resorts such as Albena, Zlatni pyasatsi, Slanchev bryag etc.:
 - the Balkan Range (Stara planina) zone Varshets, Shipkovo, Slivek, Voneshta voda, Klimentovo (Veliko Turnovo district) etc.;
 - Mud bath centers Pomorie, Albena, Marikostinovo etc.;
 - Climatic resorts Sandanski, Tryavna, Apriltsi, Teteven, Shipkovo, Shiroka laka, Dryanovo, Berkovitsa, Yundola, Rozhen, Pamporovo etc.
- The majority of Bulgarian mineral springs are located in areas with favorable climate, suitable for treatment of various diseases. This provides an exceptional opportunity to combine spa therapy with climatic treatment. This also applies to the Bulgarian Black Sea coast and the mountain resorts as well. The beautiful scenery, the clean air, the negative air ionization and the mineral waters in the mountain resorts of Bulgaria have a positive effect on human health. It comes as no surprise that in Velingrad, Narechen, Varshets,

Kyustendil, Kostenets, Sapareva banya, Sandanski, Pavel banya etc., spa and wellness are combined with climatic treatment.

The population of the country has long realized the benefits of using mineral water for treatment. During the Ottoman rule and during the first years after the Liberation, captation of springs and building spas began, together with the relevant accommodation and dining infrastructure. It is at that time when resorts such as Bankya, Gorna banya, Boyana, Varshets, Kyustendil, Chepino, Ladzhene, Strelcha, Sapareva banya, Haskovo mineral baths, Voneshta voda, Pavel banya and others emerged. In the years following World War II the recreation expanded and increased its mass character.

The Bulgarian spa resources can be zoned in 10 geographical areas (Stamov, Aleksieva, 2003). These are:

- the Danube Plain;
- the Balkan Range (Stara planina) area (Shipkovo, Voneshta voda, Varshets, Stoletovo etc.).
- the Sub-Balkan valleys (Gorna Banya, Pavel banya, Bankya, Banya, Sliven mineral baths);
- Kraishte and Srednogorie;
- the Thracian-Strandzha area (Stara Zagora mineral baths, Merichleri, Asenovgrad springs, the "Tri vodi" springs etc.);
- the Osogovo-Belasitsa mountain range and the Middle Struma valley (Sandanski, Levunovski mineral springs, Marikostinovo);
- Rila Mountain (Sapareva banya, Dolna banya, Momin prohod etc.).
- Pirin Mountain and the Mesta River valley (Dobrinishte, Ognyanovo);
- the Rhodope Mountains (Chepino, Ladzhene and Kamenitsa quarters of Velingrad, Mihalkovo, Devin, Narechen);
- · the Black Sea coast.

Religious tourism

- 20 Religious tourism is a type of specialized tourism, which satisfies the religious and spiritual needs, as well as the relevant arts, cultural, historical and other values.
- Depending on the purpose, religious tourism sub-divisions are: missionary tourism a specialized travel (a mission) aimed at disseminating the Christian doctrine; pilgrimage a journey outside the place of residence for religious reasons; educational religious tourism specialized trips for educational purposes and increasing the qualification of the participants those can be organized as "study tours", "religious congress tourism"; religious festival tourism attending organized celebrations of religious motive, which have a mass character celebrating saints or religious events (in Spain, Italy, France etc.).
- As it was already mentioned above, religious tourism is related to visiting sites of religious significance such as churches, monasteries, synagogues, mosques etc. Since the main temples of the various religions are located in settlements they have a relatively good accessibility. The larger Christian monasteries in Bulgaria also have a well-developed transport infrastructure allowing access to them. According to surveys, about 94 % of all monasteries in Bulgaria are accessible by well-maintained roads, while 61 % of the roads are in very good condition. Accommodation facilities in Bulgarian monasteries, however, are in very poor condition. Souvenir shops only exist in four of the largest monasteries in Rila, Bachkovo, Troyan and Klisurski monastery. Emerging of such trade is observed also in Samokov, Dryanovski Osenovlak and some other monasteries. The

church boards of trustees play a major role in increasing the tourist attendance of monasteries. Because of lack of such will, away from tourist routes remain the Chiprovtzi, Maglizhi, Rakovishki and others monasteries. Only 11 of all monasteries in the country are able to develop tourist activities in the true sense of religious tourism (Bachkovo, Troyan, Gabrovo, Klisurski, Lopushanski, Dryanovo, Samokov, Strupets, Kapinovo, Sokolovski, Kalofer monastery). A visit to a monastery is associated with an array of reasons for the different tourists.

In Bulgaria there are many religious complexes dating back to the country's ancient history - rock churches, monasteries etc. (Aladzha Monastery, the rock monasteries in the Shumen plateau, the Ivanovo rock monastery along the Rusenski Lom River etc.). These sites can also be related to cultural and educational tourism. Similar intermediate positions hold the ancient shrines located throughout the country. One of the least known but increasingly visited places is the ancient cromlech (a religious complex of huge megalithic boulders near the town of Madzharovo in the Rhodope Mountains, similar to the famous Stonehenge in England). Such places are numerous and should be developed mainly with support of the state authorities and be provided with transport access.

Golf tourism

- 24 Golf tourism part of the sports tourism. Sports tourism (ALEKSIEVA, STAMOV, 2003) is a specialized type of (alternative) tourism that meets the needs of tourists of sports, recreation and active recreation by participating in various sports and activities.
- Very often this type of tourism is not practiced separately, but is usually combined with other types of tourism: cultural-cognitive, entertainment, health and spa tourism, ecotourism. In its more elitist aspect, sports tourism is practiced by highly paid corporate executives. In this case, the latter are willing to devote their weekend to a rest in an exotic location, being able in the same time to practice their favorite sport tennis, squash, climbing, paragliding, golf etc. In that case the requirements for accommodation facilities are much higher considering the financial profile of such tourists. In such cases, it is possible to combine sports with congress tourism.
- The first golf course in Bulgaria was opened in 2000 in the town of Ihtiman, Sofia district. The course stretches across an area of 400 acres and has 18 holes. The elitism of this sport in Bulgaria can be seen by the cost of a one-year-membership in the "Air Sofia" club, which is over 1 700 BGN. In that same complex horseback riding, bowling, squash, fitness and other activities can be practiced as well. The accommodation facilities are represented by 4 villas in various architectural styles (a Bulgarian Koprivshtitsa house, a Japanese house, a Western European and a universal house) with a total of 9 bedrooms and one apartment. All villas overlook the course. Additionally, the "Ihtiman" hotel can also be used with its 32 rooms, several apartments, a bowling and a squash hall, a summer garden, a restaurant, conference halls.
- In May 2004, the second golf course in Bulgaria opened near the town of Sliven. It has an area of 500 acres and it too has 18 holes. One of the most modern golf courses is currently being built near the town of Razgrad, with an area of 600 acres, located between 6 hills. It is expected to attract some of the best golfers in the world and to significantly increase the town's revenues. However, the accommodation facilities in the town are still not at

the appropriate level so as to meet the higher requirements that golf tourists would have. This is one of the essential problems of tourism in Bulgaria in general – namely - the missing link between the construction of sports facilities on one hand, and the specificity and capacity of the superstructure and the adjacent infrastructure, on the other.

- Due to the growing interest in Bulgaria by foreign tourists in recent times, several other golf courses are expected to be built. One of those courses will be located in Razgrad in the north-east of the country, some 90 km from the Black Sea. Other courses along the Black Sea coast are planned to be ready within the next few years: two at Kavarna and one at Primorsko, near Sozopol.
- As far as mountainous and ski resorts are concerned, golf courses exist in the resort town of Bansko, and there is a huge golf complex located in Dolna banya a small town between Kostenets and Borovets (the latter being the largest ski resort in the country.).
- The fact that the Black Sea coast is the most popular and attractive tourist destination in Bulgaria, explains the increased investments in golf projects in this region. For the time being, the most impressive among them all stand out the Black Sea Rama, the Lighthouse Golf Resort and the Thracian Cliffs Golf & SPA Resort.
- The most refined and exclusive golf destination is the Black Sea Rama, near the seaside town of Kavarna. One of the courses is already functioning. The construction of hotels and supporting infrastructure is due.
- Another distinctive project in that region is the Summerland Golf & Beach Club. This is one of the complexes that combine high quality construction, good location and excellent conditions for small and large investors. Located in a quiet place about 300 meters from the wide, sandy beach of Kavarna, the Summerland Golf & Beach Club is a wonderful combination of charming traditional Bulgarian architecture and modern design. It is divided into 4 sections, including 77 apartments (studios, single-, double- and three-room apartments), each of which will be equipped with air conditioning and a fully equipped kitchen. The apartments offered for sale are unfurnished but an alternative option exists, allowing the purchase of a full furnishing package, tailored entirely to the individual requirements of the customer.

Cultural - cognitive tourism

- The emergence of cultural tourism as a research topic dates back to the early 20th century, but it was not until 2002 that the International Council on Monuments and Sites published an official definition as follows: "Cultural or cultural-cognitive tourism is the form of tourism, which focuses on the cultural environment, which in turn may include cultural and historical attractions of a given destination or cultural heritage, values and lifestyle, arts, crafts, traditions and customs of the local population. Moreover, cultural and cognitive routes can be extended visits or participation in cultural events, visits to museums, concerts, exhibitions, galleries etc. (International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)).
- Cultural tourism is defined by the World Tourism Organization (WTO Report, 2012) as "journeys whose main or additional goal is visiting sites and events whose cultural and historical value has become part of the cultural heritage of a given community."

- 35 Since Bulgaria is a country with centuries-old cultural layers, there are plenty of resources for this type of tourism. The best indicator of cultural tourism regionalization in Bulgaria is the distribution of the museum network across the country.
- Assuming that tourism resources are an objective indicator in the process of regionalization of cultural tourism, we can focus our attention on sites other than archaeological ones, located *in situ* in a given environment. The distribution of the museum network by districts also allows the spotting of the leading regions for this type of tourism. Moreover, since the development of the museum network is in an urban environment, it largely determines the tourist flow into those regions.

Table 1: Museum network in Bulgaria as of 2011 (by districts)

Number of museums	District	Number of museums
7	Pazardzhik	9
11	Pernik	4
8	Pleven	4
10	Plovdiv	14
3	Razgrad	3
3	Ruse	4
9	Silistra	5
6	Sliven	5
2	Smolyan	3
5	Sofia	7
6	Sofia-grad	27
6	Stara Zagora	12
5	Targovishte	4
11	Yambol	4
	7 11 8 10 3 3 3 9 6 2 5 6	7 Pazardzhik 11 Pernik 8 Pleven 10 Plovdiv 3 Razgrad 3 Ruse 9 Silistra 6 Sliven 2 Smolyan 5 Sofia 6 Sofia-grad 6 Stara Zagora 5 Targovishte

Penkova, S. 2012. Museum network in Bulgaria, National Military History Museum, S.

- In this case too as in the review of the archaeological sites several districts can be distinguished: Sofia-grad, Plovdiv, Stara Zagora, Shumen, Veliko Tarnovo and Burgas stand out with over 10 museums each. Naturally, the capital city tops, in line with the global trend. Those districts form the group of very high spatial concentration of museums. Another group is composed by districts with a number of museums between 5 and 10, such as Gabrovo, Varna, Pazardzhik, Sofia, Lovech, Montana. This second group can be defined as a group of moderate concentration of museums. The group of districts with the lowest concentration of museums is composed by Targovishte, Yambol, Kardzhali, Ruse, Pleven and the rest of the districts. The level of significance of the museums is not taken into account in this case; however, the status of the museums can be used as an additional indicator - national museums, regional museums etc. This would reveal the importance of the territory as a quality indicator. For example, although Pleven district falls in the third group, its tourist flow can hardly be the same as the one of Yambol district, for example: due to the presence of objects of national importance (the Pleven Panorama etc.), Pleven district is quite significant in terms of cultural tourism.
- If we combine the two discussed indicators (the concentration of 1 architectural sites and 2 museums) the leading areas in the country can be determined, and hence a reasonable regionalization of Bulgarian cultural tourism can be suggested. By both

indicators the Shumen-Preslav region is leading, therefore it is only logical that it should be considered a separate cultural and tourist region. Stara Zagora - Kazanlak, Veliko Tarnovo, Plovdiv and other regions follow. We should keep in mind that despite the small proportion of archaeological sites, the over-concentration of museums gives us grounds to consider Sofia-grad district as a separate region of cultural tourism. We believe those are the two leading regions of this kind of alternative tourism in Bulgaria.

Profile of the practitioners of alternative tourism in Bulgaria

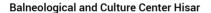
- The profile of tourists by type of tourism exhibits some differences in behaviour, preferences and demographic structure (Penerliev, 2016).
 - The tourist profile of those practicing cultural and educational tourism in Bulgaria is the following:
 - Men and women are distributed almost evenly, with a slight prevalence of men (men 54 %, women 46 %). Forty nine percent are aged between 36 and 55 years, 36 % between 15 and 35, 73 % are employed. The share of people with higher education is 68 %;
 - Followers of cultural tourism come mainly from Western Europe, the Balkan countries and Russia; 55 % of those practicing cultural tourism have already been in Bulgaria before. They are here for "adventure" holiday and are attracted mainly by the cultural and historical landmarks, the low prices and the nature;
 - 37 % arrived through a travel agency. Nearly 2/3 of the tourists plan their trip a month or even 2-3 months upfront; A quarter of the interviewed arrived in the country without a reservation;
 - The average number of overnight stays is 6.4 days, during which they spent an average of € 80 per day per person, or € 458 per person for the entire holiday.
- 40 Those practicing eco-tourism, on the other hand, have the following profile:
 - eco-tourists combine their holiday mostly with mountainous (45 %), culinary (20 %) and cultural tourism (15 %);
 - eco- and cultural tourism are perceived similarly by visitors practicing ecological tourism; therefore, it would be appropriate to consider combining those two types, even more so since both types are united by the concept of "adventure holiday";
 - regarding the organization of their vacation, eco-tourists have a specific behavior they rely
 mostly on the services of tour operators 60 % of the interviewed group had chosen to
 organize their trip with the help of a tourist intermediary.
 - According to the generating market, eco-tourists in Bulgaria are mostly residents of the United Kingdom (about 1/3 of all) and Western Europe (about 1/4). Some 20 % come from Balkan countries and 15 % come from Russia;
 - men prevail over women (58 %);
 - most often "eco" tourists are aged 36-55 years (about half of all tourists), but the share of young people is also high about 43 %. University graduates are dominant (70 %), 78 % are employed and 18 % of them hold a managerial position;
 - Rural tourism too has its own specific features in terms of behaviour and profile of tourists who prefer it. For example:
 - 45 % of the target group of foreign tourists (rural tourism) have used the services of travel agencies. 1/3 of the tourists have arrived in the country without a reservation;

- 73 % of rural tourism practitioners prepare their journey from one to three months before the trip itself; the time of preliminary planning is directly dependent on the length of stay the longer the duration of stay, the earlier the planning of the trip is;
- the average stay of those practicing rural tourism in Bulgaria is 6.1 nights. Tourists from Scandinavia and North America spend time in Bulgaria the longest (an average of 9 nights), while visitors from the Balkan countries stay the least (an average of 3.6 nights);
- the average expense per person per day in rural tourism was just under € 62, while for the whole holiday € 326.
- rural tourism is practiced mainly by middle-aged people (36-55 years) 58 % of all; 72 % are employed, out of which 20 % hold managerial positions. Tourists with higher education dominate (nearly 2/3 of all).

Key conclusions

41 Although relatively small by area, Bulgaria exhibits various resources for the development of alternative forms of tourism. Those forms of tourism, however, have but little significance in the general balance of the tourism industry in the country. This is due to the high concentration of accommodation facilities along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast and the continuing advertising of the country mostly as a summer tourist destination. Alternative forms of tourism are for people from the big city, looking for "different" kind of calm and clean environment. These forms of tourism are featured by a higher income per tourist compared to traditional forms of tourism. Alternative forms of tourism are practiced by tourists with a higher education level and income, and they represent a true alternative to our hectic modern life. Due to the limited volume of this paper, other alternative types of tourism developed in Bulgaria will be characterized in the second part of the current paper.

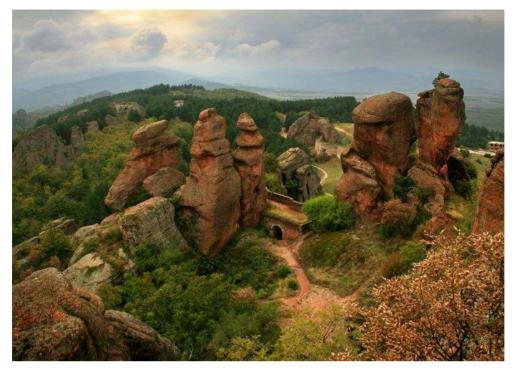
Attachments - Landscapes of Bulgaria





www.gradhisar.info

Rocks near the town of Belogradchik – Candidate for the 7 Wonders of the World in 2010



http://www.detelinatours.com

Tryavna Vilidge



www.kenguru.bg

Golf Center "Trakiya Clifs"



www.pochivka.bg

Global Symbol of Bulgaria: Madara Horseman (UNESCO) — Hewn on stone bas-relief by an unknown author — VIII A.D



www.bgglobe.net

Old Town of Plovdiv City - Center for Cultural Tourism



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ABSTRACTS

This paper presents a general overview about the most common types of alternative forms of tourism observed in Bulgaria, considering the regional differences in the concentration of the respective types of tourism, as well as the specialization of the different regions. Basic definitions adopted in Bulgaria and the most important resources for the development of alternative forms of tourism have also been indicated. The study reveals the most important centers and areas of alternative tourism in the country and describes the profile of those practicing various types of alternative tourism in Bulgaria.

Este artigo apresenta uma visão geral sobre os tipos mais comuns de formas alternativas de turismo observadas na Bulgária, considerando as diferenças regionais na concentração dos respectivos tipos de turismo, bem como a especialização das diferentes regiões. Também foram indicadas definições básicas adotadas na Bulgária e os recursos mais importantes para o desenvolvimento de formas alternativas de turismo. O estudo revela os mais importantes centros e áreas de turismo alternativo no país e descreve o perfil daqueles que praticam vários tipos de turismo alternativo na Bulgária.

Cet article presente une vision générale autour du tourisme alternatif en Bulgarie — y compris quelques définitions — en soulignant notamment les différences et les spécialisation régionales. On remarque les centres du tourisme alternatif les plus importants et le profil des pratiquants, ainsi que les ressources naturelles.

Este artículo presenta una visión general sobre los tipos más comunes de formas alternativas de turismo observadas en Bulgaria, considerando las diferencias regionales en la concentración de los diferentes tipos de turismo, de acuerdo con la especialización de las diferentes regiones. Igualmente, son presentadas las definiciones básicas adoptadas en Bulgaria y los recursos más importantes para el desarrollo de formas alternativas de turismo. El estudio revela los mas importantes centros de turismo alternativo en el país y describe los diferentes perfiles de turismo alternativo presentes en Bulgaria.

INDEX

Mots-clés: tourisme, tourisme alternatif, genres de tourisme, différences régionales, Bulgarie. Palavras-chave: turismo, turismo alternativo, tipos de turismo, diferenças regionais, Bulgária. Palabras claves: turismo, turismo alternativo, tipos de turismo, diferencias regionales, Bulgaria Keywords: tourism, alternative tourism, types of tourism, regional diferences, Bulgaria.

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