

## The Cultural and Natural Heritage in the Western Part of the Republic of Macedonia and Their Impact on the Spatial Development

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### Abstract

*The territory of Western Macedonia covers an area of 10473 km<sup>2</sup>, or 40.7% of the total territory of the Republic of Macedonia. The territory includes Polog, Pelagonia and the Southwest Plan Regions. The cultural and the natural heritage in the western part exceeds the country borders, so some of them are important tourist destinations in the Balkans and Europe. The transformation of the area can be observed through the number of visitors, realized overnight stays, participation of the tourism in the national GDP and their impact on the development of linear and institutional infrastructure in this part of the country.*

**Key words:** *spatial development, cultural and natural heritage, Western Macedonia.*

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### INTRODUCTION

In the Republic of Macedonia, according to the type, quality and size, tourist localities and facilities are spatially separated into three large zones with a certain tourist value, as follows: Western Macedonia, Eastern Macedonia and Povardarie (Panov, 1968).

According to the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics, NUTS 3, adopted by the government, the Republic of Macedonia is divided into 8 regions. Three of these

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regions are forming the territory of Western Macedonia. These are the Southwest, Polog and Pelagonia region<sup>2</sup>.

Southwest region extends at the furthest south part of Macedonia with an area of 3340 km<sup>2</sup>, Pelagonia region is located in the southern part of Macedonia and covers part of Pelagonia valley and the basin of Prespa Lake. It covers an area of 4717 km<sup>2</sup>. Polog region, which covers an area of 2416 km<sup>2</sup> is located in the northwestern part of the Republic of Macedonia. According to detailed indicators, i.e. towards the importance of the tourist places, the number of accommodation facilities, nights spent and the number of tourists during the season, functionally most developed is the western part of the country. The largest contribution to the tourist industry realizes the Southwest region, Polog region is known for its natural heritage, while Pelagonia region, thanks to the proximity to the Southwest region, which is considered as the most attractive on the one hand, and the Corridor 10 passing nearby on the other hand, creates the transitional character of the region (Panov, 1968).

Position and traffic connections are the basis, the most important criterion. It is therefore very important the distance from the main tourist flows and connection to the main tourist claimants (Budinoski, 1995). Therefore, as an important element in terms of traffic connection is the connection by rail (Budinoski, 1995), i.e. railways Skopje-Tetovo-Gostivar-Kicevo and Skopje-Veles-Prilep-Bitola (Stojmilov, 2005), the existence of the international Airport in Ohrid, as well as proximity to highways, Corridor 8 and a branch of Corridor 10. Certainly, it must be mentioned the border crossings Blato, Kjafa San, St. Naum and Stenje on the Macedonian-Albanian border, Medzitlija on the Macedonian-Greek border and Jazhince on the Macedonian-Kosovo border (Stojmilov, 2005).

## **WORKING METHODS**

The space should be viewed as a set of features in order to minimize collisions and maximize the complementarities (Stojmilov, 1981). Therefore, the methodology that was applied in the preparation of this work is multidisciplinary. The results of the research from different scientific disciplines adjust to the needs of this paper. There are used the method of research, methods of assessment and qualitative methods, then method of inventory and evaluation. The analysis is done with the level of

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<sup>2</sup> Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 158 from 28.12.2007.

regions, and larger spatial units. General methods and techniques are related to planning activities while making the analysis, evaluation and synthesis as a methodological phase of spatial planning development. With help from the methods of analysis and synthesis based on individual buildings or sites of natural and cultural heritage in space, we get complex parts.

First was implemented the inventory and evaluation of the conditions, benefits and factors for development of tourism in different regions and it is taken as an input for the organization and revitalization of these areas for tourism purpose (Stojmilov, 1981).

Besides the above mentioned methods there were used the method of direct research or field work, a method of direct observation, mathematical-statistical method, and the method of comparison with which it has already been worked, especially on defining the spatial units. Among those names must be mentioned Panov, Jeremic, Stojmilov, Zikov, and others. After presenting the situation and the facts necessary for the application of these methods, the results obtained during the research are presented in the paper.

## **CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE OF WESTERN MACEDONIA**

The geographical position of the Republic of Macedonia being in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula, and the lot of natural beauties and goods that are found here, have been a major cause of these spaces to be inhabited by different people and civilizations, ranging from ancient Greece and the Roman Empire to the Ottoman Empire (Panov, 1968). All of them have left traces in the material culture of the Republic of Macedonia as fortresses, cemeteries, houses, churches, monasteries, mosques, baths, etc. in various styles, from Byzantine to Oriental, but all of them have its own indigenous native art (Baseski, 1981).

Besides the above mentioned natural amenities, close contribution to the creation of a tourist profile is diverse and indigenous cultural and historical heritage. Archaeological findings, castles, churches, mosques and folk architecture arouse special interest.

Natural heritage is a part of nature and sites consisting of geological, physical and geographic or biological formations or groups of such formations, with outstanding value from the aesthetic, conservation or scientific point of view<sup>3</sup>. The territory of the

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<sup>3</sup> Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 67/04; Law for nature protection, Skopje, 2004.

Republic Macedonia abounds in natural features that need to evaluate and affirm in order to be visited by nature lovers.

Tourism is directly tied to space and conditioned by its specific natural features. However, tourism does not require any kind of space, but a quality one and as a rule, that space is always limited (Stojmilov, 1979).

### **Southwest Region**

This region has the most attractive natural and anthropogenic motives for the development of tourism in our country. With their attractiveness they exceed the borders of our country and make this area one of the most important tourist destinations in Europe (Budinovski, 1995).

As the most important city we will mention the city of Ohrid, located in the southwest of the region. It is believed that the city existed under the name Lihnidus 353 BC and, therefore, all the cultural and historical sights are protected by UNESCO in 1980. We will mention sites and buildings of cultural heritage in Ohrid like: the old town of Ohrid, which is an open museum with its well-preserved architecture of the period between 17 and 19 century. The houses are not only interesting in appearance, and built on multiple floors, but also after their interiors. One of the most interesting is the house of Robevci in which today is housed the Ethnological Museum of Ohrid (Panov, 1968). Samuil's Fortress (Samoilovata Tvrдина), built upon foundations of an older fortress is one of the most significant and oldest monuments in Ohrid (Mileski, 1970). Special interest arouses the St. Sophia church, which is the oldest in Ohrid and in our country too. It is from the 11<sup>th</sup> century, but perhaps even much earlier. In the Ottoman Empire it was a mosque, the icons were covered with plaster, but after World War II, they were restored and conserved. The frescoes are from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century (Mileski, 1970). The church St. Pantelejmon, Plaosnik which is surrounded by buildings of the first university in the Balkan, the Clement University that was first built in 886. The ancient amphitheater in Ohrid, which is adapted in a facility for performance of cultural and artistic manifestations during the tourist season (Mileski, 1970). The monastery of St. Naum, from 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century, which is located in the southern part of the lake. Here is also located the tomb of St. Naum. Church St. Jovan Kaneo and many others<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Tourist guide: Macedonia: cradle of culture, land of nature. Ministry of Economy, Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, 2009.

The town of Struga well known by the Struga's Poetry Evenings that were begun with organizations in 1962 in honor of the brothers Miladinovci. They are organized in August. Then, the monastery complex Kaliste, known for the cave church of St. Bogorodica.

The city of Kichevo, located in the heart of Western Macedonia. With rail is connected to Gostivar, Tetovo and Skopje, and with road to Gostivar, Tetovo and Skopje. With regional roads is connected with Ohrid and Bitola. Kichevo is mentioned in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. One of the most important archaeological localities is Kitino Kale which got its name after the sister of Prince Marko, who is considered that had lived in this area. But thanks to the coins of Alexander III that were found here, it is assumed that this locality was inhabited much earlier. Here we must mention the monastery of a Holy Mother of God or, The Birth of the Virgin Mary (St. Bogorodica Precista or Raganje na Presveta Bogorodica), a monastery dedicated to the Christians and the Muslims. The church is believed that has a healing water spring and an icon which is believed that helps those who want to have a child. It was founded in 1316. Then Knezinski Monastery, dedicated to St. George which has existed since the first centuries of Christianity. Museum of Liberation, housed in a building from 1892, in the city center, which owns a number of documents, photographs, images, maps, flags, mosaics, frescoes, weapons and other items.

A special feature to this region gives the monastery St. John the Baptist (St. Jovan Bigorski) located near Debar. The monastery was founded in 1020, the church was entirely built in 1800 and painted in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The rich iconography that has been painted in the monastery is from the period between 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. This monastery has the most beautiful carved iconostasis. Then, the monastery in the village Rajcica dedicated to St. Barbara from 1597.

We also must mention the village Galicnik were, every year in July on St. Peter's day is maintained the traditional Galicnik Wedding, event that contributes to foster customs, folk songs, games and dances, and Galicnik's ethnic costumes.

The natural heritage characteristics of this region are the Debar baths, better known under the names Banjishte and Kosavrasti that belong to the sulphate-hydrocarbonats, alkaline-earth muriatic waters (Stojmilov, 2011). The temperature of the water in Bath Banjishte is 39°C, and of Kosovrasti is 41°C and it is used to treat several types of diseases<sup>5</sup>. In these baths except "The health tourism" it started to develop the recreational tourism too. Near the Baths there is the only gypsum cave

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<sup>5</sup> <http://bdcapa.com/mk/терапии/>.

in the Republic of Macedonia, which falls into the category Natural monument which attracts with its specificity and uniqueness.

Interesting for nature lovers are also the Vevcan's Springs, located on the eastern slopes of the mountain Jablanica. They represent a typical anisotropic karst aquifer whose water erupts from cracks. The main spring emerges from a cave with a capacity of 1.5 m<sup>3</sup>/s (Kolchakovski, 2004). In 2012 the Vevcan's Springs are declared by the Law as a monument of nature, covering an area of 1370 ha. The springs are arranged for visiting.

Black Drim River is the expiration of the Ohrid Lake with a total length of 56 km in the territory of the Republic Macedonia. Black Drim River has built an imposing ravine valley, while from the water, there are created two artificial reservoirs (Globochica and Debar Lake) which are a recreation for nature lovers (Kolchakovski, 2004).

The biggest tourist significance is the Ohrid Lake, the biggest natural lake in the Republic of Macedonia with an area of 348.8 km<sup>2</sup> of which 229 km<sup>2</sup> belong to the Republic of Macedonia (Kolchakovski, 2004). Interesting for the lake is that it has a population of about 147 endemic species of organisms from which a portion are living fossils, almost unchanged from the tertiary period. They are the following: the endemic sponge (*Ochridaspongia rotunda*), about 27 relict species of snails from which 86% are endemic, then *Belvica* (*Acantolingua ochridana*) and most characteristic species of Ohrid trout (*Salmo letnica*) (Kolchakovski, 2006). The lake with its beauty is declared by the Law as a Monument of nature, and in 1979 by the international organization UNESCO is putted on the list of World Natural Heritage.

In this region interesting by its emergence and location is the Mountain Galicica located between Lake Ohrid and Prespa from the west to the east. In this area are interesting the geomorphological relief forms from which, ten caves and pits, two striking glacial cirques and periglacial impressive solifluctions terraces on Old Galicica. It is rich with flora and fauna. Due to the natural beauty and the flora and fauna, in 1958 it was declared as a National Park in the Republic Macedonia with an area of 22750 ha. Within the National Park there are 600 flora species, of which 170 are of woody vegetation, there are relict and endemic plants. Also under protection in this area are placed 170 species, of which 10 are amphibians, 18 reptiles, 124 birds and 18 mammals<sup>6</sup>. Here are natural curiosities: the springs

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<sup>6</sup> Programme for development of the Southwest mountain region 2010-2015, Center for development of the Southwest region, 2010.

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near St. Naum, and the only island in the Republic Macedonia - Golem Grad in the Prespa Lake (Kolchakovski, 2006).

Great influence, attracts the sulphur spring Duvalo located in the village Kosel which lays northeast of Ohrid. It is a post-volcanic appearance that looks like a miniature crater with a diameter of 0.5 m and a depth of 30 cm. From the opening of the crater erupt emissions of carbon dioxide and sulfur hydrogen. Thus, this phenomenon is at the same time a Moffett and sulfur spring (Dimitrovska, 2010). In 1979 the site was declared a monument of nature.

The most important in this area is the karst relief form cave “Slatinski Izvor” located on the left side of the Slatina River valley in the vicinity of the village of Slatina. It is the longest explored cave in the Republic of Macedonia with a length of about 4 km<sup>7</sup>. The cave is rich in internal morphological elements, cascades, dry riverbed, river terrace and a large variety of cave decorations. The most striking cave ornament is the ornament in the form of a cluster that is the first registered in our country. The Cave “Slatinski Izvor” is put on the temporary list in 2004 for natural values of UNESCO World Heritage, while in 2011 was declared as a natural monument of world importance.

The cave Peshna which is located 6 km from Makedonski Brod is also interesting for visiting. A characteristic of this cave is its slot. The slot has impressive dimensions 52.4 x 16.8 m, (Kolchakovski, 2004). From the northern part of the cave after heavy rainfall breaks a strong spring, while in dry periods it dries up. At the entrance of the cave there is a medieval fortress. This cave is proposed to be declared as a natural monument.

### **Pelagonia Region**

In this region are located the cities of Bitola, Prilep, Resen, Krusevo and Demir Hisar. Bitola is presumably founded by the Slavs, and under the present name was first recorded in 1014. In the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries it was a famous shopping center. From 1382 when was under Turkish rule, it became part of the largest and most important strategic centers. Then were built madrassas and religious Law school, mosques (Nikolovski *et al.*, 1971). Among significant facilities that are part of the cultural heritage it can be emphasized the mosques Ajdar Kadi from 969, Yeni Mosque from 966 or 1558/59, with 40 meters high minaret, mosque Isaac from 914, and the Bezisten, the covered Bitola’s bazaar.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ursuspeleos.com.mk/slatinskiizvor.htm/>.

Shirok Sokak, the main street and pedestrian zone, on both sides with houses which testify about the old architecture with rich wooden verandas and rich ornamentation. At the end of Shirok Sokak is the Clock Tower, which is thought to have been built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The tower is 33 meters high.

Heraklea is mentioned as a city that was formed or found by Philip II around the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. In 168 BC, Heraclea was under Roman rule. In the early Byzantine period it was a bishopric. In 533 AD it was first mentioned for the first time as Heraklea Linkestis that is just a proof that it is the same Heraklea.

Near Prilep is Stibera, archaeological site of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, with turret walls, built of stone without using of plaster. The city had acropolis and is surrounded with massive walls, statues of marble, metal and ceramic objects, and coins that testify for the trade relationship with the Aegean and the Adriatic Sea (Baseski, 1981).

Treskavec Monastery, is 10 km from the center of Prilep which originated from the late 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century. There, the Byzantine frescoes are from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The monastery is considered to be one of the most valuable medieval monuments on the Balkan, counted in the list of 100 most endangered monuments in the world.

Tobacco Museum, which is unique and is one of its kind on the Balkan and one of the biggest in Europe, opened in 1973 on the occasion of 100 years of tobacco production in Prilep (Panov *et al.*, 2010).

Krushevo is a city where the houses themselves represent extraordinary valuable architectural buildings with its original structure and appearance, which amazed visitors as they represent an indigenous architecture. How valuable they are, shows the fact that 90 houses in the city are under the protection of the Law, (Stojmilov, 1977). Among the significant buildings is the Makedonium, a monument which symbolize the liberation struggle of the Macedonian people, then also highly visited are the City Museum and Art Gallery Nikola Martinoski (Stojmilov, 1977). Near Resen, around 3 km east of the village Slivnica, it is the Slivnica Monastery which is dedicated to St. Mary. The church was painted in 1607. There were inns, but now, thayare destroyed. Slepche monastery, near Demir Hisar, is dedicated to St. John the Baptist (St. Jovan Pretecha) that existed in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century (Nikolovski *et al.*, 1971).

The Prespa Lake is situated between mountains Galicica from the west and Pelister from the east. It covers an area of approximately 274 km<sup>2</sup> of which 176.8 km<sup>2</sup> belong to the Republic of Macedonia. In Prespa Lake and its surroundings lives endemic and relict flora and fauna. There are registered 24 endemic taxons (Dimitrovska, 2010). Fish animal community in the lake is represented by 17 native species of which 6



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species are Macedonian endemic species and one specie is Balkan endemic. From avifauna are represented 105 bird species. Of these, 61 species of waterfowl are under strict protection. Because of the environmental values and scientific importance, the Prespa Lake in 1977 was declared as a monument of nature, and in 1995 is placed on the World Ramsar list of important aquatic sites<sup>8</sup>. The Island Golem Grad is located in the waters of Prespa Lake. The island has a length of about 800 m and a maximum width of 500 m, (Kolchakovski, 2004). The Island Golem Grad is characterized by its flora and fauna. The most characteristic occurrence is the wild juniper (*Juniperus excelsa*) and a number of snakes from where it received the name Snake's Island. The Island is within the National Park Galicica and is protected by the Law. In the island are also found remains of Neolithic settlements, Hellenistic, Roman times and from the Middle Ages. It can be said that the island is interesting for visiting, but is not yet adapted for organised tourist visits.

This region includes strict nature reserve and ornithological site Ezerani which was declared by the Law in 1996. It occupies the northern coastal part of Prespa Lake, with a protected area of 2.080 ha<sup>9</sup>. There are about 200 species of birds, of which 104 are water birds, 62 are on the list of protected species under the Bern Convention, while 3 species are on the European Red List of Globally Threatened Species (Dimitrovska, 2010).

Interesting to visit in this region is the national park Pelister, the oldest in the Republic of Macedonia, declared in 1948. It is located on the same mountain and covers an area of 17.150 ha<sup>10</sup>. Especially important for the park's forest is the complex of Tertiary five- needles pine "Molika" (*Pinus peuce*). In the national park striking are the periglacial relief forms - rock rivers and from the glacial relief, the Big and the Small Lakes on the Pelister also known under the name "Pelister's Eyes".

The locality Markovi Kuli is situated near the town of Prilep. The fortress Markovi Kuli lies on a natural rocky hill whose top is 951 meters above sea level, enhanced with several defensive ramparts. The settlement is taken as unconquerable fortress. Here lived King Samuel and then the hero Marko after whom it was named. It is composed of numerous different denudation relief forms which are representing an exclusive sculpture of the relief. For national monument the locality was first declared

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<sup>8</sup> Resolution law for nominating the Prespa lake as a Natural monument, Skopje, 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 37/96; Law for proclaiming of ornitology site "Ezerani" on the Prespa lake, for the strict natural reserve, Skopje, 1996.

<sup>10</sup> Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 150; Law for proclaiming a part of mountain Pelister as a national park, Skopje, 2007.

in 1967 and again in 2006 and 2004 was declared on the provisional list of UNESCO World Heritage site.

This region includes the Natural Reserve "Lokvi- Golemo Konjari" which as a strict nature reserve was declared by the Law in 2003. It covers an area of 50 ha<sup>11</sup>. The main reason for declaring the locality as a strict nature reserve is the presence of endemic dragonflies Pelagonia's shrimp (*Chirocephalus pelagicus*) (Dimitrovska, 2010).

### **Polog Region**

In this region, there are two urban settlements, Tetovo and Gostivar, as most significant tourist localities. Tetovo is situated in the Northwest part of the region, and it is said that it dated from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. More valuable cultural and historical objects in the town and its nearenass are Tetovo's Kale, a fortress built in 1820 by Abdulaman Pasha, where the influence of the Ottoman architecture can be seen in a great deal. This archeological complex is consisted of five domes, kitchens, baths and a well, remains of storehouses and dinning rooms, and in one part under the Kale, there are some remains of a church that existed there in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. There are some remains of a prison with three underground canals. The Multicolored Mosque or better known as the Pasha's Mosque, situated in the town, dates from 1495. In the yard of the mosque there is a turbe (a tomb), where the sisters Hurshida and Mensure are buried, who were the main donators for this mosque to be built. Arabat Baba Teke, built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, has a shadravan (fountain), tomb, tower, a guest mansion and here, the dervish life lasted till 1912. Today here is hosted the Folk Town museum.

From the natural beauties we can select the Shara Mountain, which is situated in the northwest part of the Polog region. It is one of the highest mountains in the Republic of Macedonia with the highest peak Turchin (2.748 m). On the mountain can be found the fluvial, karst, glacial and periglacial relief. An evidence that the glacial relief is present are the cirques and glacial lakes. In the part of the mountain that belongs to the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, there are totally 27 glacial lakes, of which, 19 are permanent. More known glacial lakes are the Bogovin lake, the Black lake, and the Big Gjol, whereas the highest sea level lake is the Dobresh lake (2.440) (Kolchakovski, 2004). On the Shara mountain there are nearly

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<sup>11</sup> Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 71/03; Law for proclaiming of the locality "Lokvi-Big Konjarevo" into strict natural reserve, Skopje, 2003.

200 endemic taxons. From the fauna there are present relict daily butterflies, couple of reptile kinds and mammals which are classified as endangered species. The Shara mountain is nominated to be declared as a National Park because of its natural beauty and rich wildlife.

The National Park Mavrovo represents the biggest national park in Macedonia and is situated between the three borders between Albania, Kosovo and the Republic of Macedonia. It covers the southern parts of the Shara mountain, the western and central parts of the mountain Bistra as well as the mountain Korab. The middle part of the national park covers the valley and the junction area of the river Radika. The National Park Mavrovo consisted of interesting fluvial, karst, glacial and different kinds of denudation relief forms. From the underground karst relief forms, the most known is the cave Alilica, which is situated in the valley of the river Tresonechka. The cave system Alilica is consisted of underground canals from the Upper and Lower Alilica. The total explored length of the cave is 590 m (Kolchakovski, 2004). From the hydrological objects the most characteristic is the waterfall Duf. The National Park abounds with rich wildlife from which the biggest area is covered by the complex of mount beech forests. In this area there are registered more than 1435 different plants from which 404 classes and subclasses are classified in the category of curative herbs. Nearly 13 species are endemic, and almost 29 are rare floral species<sup>12</sup>. From the wildlife are registered 140 kinds of birds (Kolchakovski, 2006). For the first time the national park is announced in 1949, and because of the great extension of the borders the park was pronounced once again in 1952. The current area of the National Park Mavrovo is 73088 ha according the old way of measuring, or 72204 ha according the new way of measuring<sup>13</sup>.

The cave Ubavica, (Beauty) or Gjonovica is situated on the mountain Bukovik, near the village Upper Gjonovica. Its explored length is 1010 m (Kolchakovski, 2004). The cave is rich with cave ornaments, a lake and a pretty high waterfall.

The cave Dona Duka is situated on the mountain Zheden with a length of 700 m (Kolchakovski, 2004). From hydrological view the cave represents a dry cave with a wide net of canals and galleries. In the cave there are small lakes which are formed by water which drops from above. It is rich in cave ornaments, and at the same time we have to say that this cave is nominated to be protected as a monument of the nature.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://nrmavrovo.org.mk/инвертебрална-фауна/>.

<sup>13</sup> <http://nrmavrovo.org.mk/општи-информации/>.

## **MATERIAL BASE, NUMBER OF VISITORS AND REALIZED OVERNIGHT STAYS**

In spite of natural-attractive, socio-cultural, communicative-traffic, spacious and other factors of the turistic offer, the Republic of Macedonia in the biggest part of international and national meaning, deals with a great amount of material-receptive factors, where the overnight stays capacity and catering objects for food and drinks (hotels, motels, bars, restaurants, pubs, etc.) are composing the nucleus of the material base directly involved into every touristic program of the touristic offer<sup>14</sup>.

One of the biggest problems that the Republic of Macedonia is faced with is the fact that the tourism unfortunately has a seasonal character. That can be seen through the number of tourists during the summer months, especially July and August which is 3 or 4 times higher than in the winter months, January and February<sup>15</sup>.

The situation is similar on the territory of Western Macedonia, but if we make an analysis of each region, separately, we can notice that the Southwest region is the most distinctive, with the biggest difference, because during the summer months the number of visitors and tourists is about 10 times bigger from the number of visitors and tourists in the winter months. In the summer period during the summer months, the Southwest region participates with over 50% of the total number of tourists in the country. This appearance in the region is naturally connected with the presence of the two natural lakes, the Ohrid and Prespa lake, and also the national park Galichica. In the Pelagonian region, these differences are not so emphasized, whereas in the Polog region the situation is quite different. Here, the number of the tourists in the winter months is almost 50% bigger compared to the summer period. It is certainly due to the presence of the two largest ski resorts, Mavrovo and Popova Shapka. Yet, the number of the tourists in this region is rather smaller than in the Southwest region.

The number of the domestic tourists in each of the regions dominates, but in the last couple of years the differences are more neglectable. The biggest number of foreign tourists comes from Serbia, Poland, Turkey and Greece. In the Southwest region the tourists are mainly from Serbia, Bulgaria, Japan and Poland, in the Pelagonia region from Slovenia, Serbia, Turkey and Greece, and in Polog region the tourists are mainly

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<sup>14</sup> Annual report for enforcing of the Spatial plan of the Republic of Macedonia in 2008, Skopje, 2009.

<sup>15</sup>[http://makstat.stat.gov.mk/pxweb2007bazi/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=Turizam\\_Reg\\_Nokeva\\_mk&ti=&path=../Database/StatistikaPoOblasti/TirizamUgostitel/Turizam/&lang=18](http://makstat.stat.gov.mk/pxweb2007bazi/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=Turizam_Reg_Nokeva_mk&ti=&path=../Database/StatistikaPoOblasti/TirizamUgostitel/Turizam/&lang=18).

from Kosovo and Albania, which is mostly like, because of the closeness to the border with these countries. On the national level, the foreign tourists dominate.

The number of tourists in the last ten years, although with some oscillations, in general, marks a positive trend. Of the total number of tourists in the country, in 2014, the Western part of the Republic of Macedonia participated with 49.5%. The biggest share of 36.6% of the total number of tourists in the country belongs to the Southwest region and 74% of the number of tourists in the Western part of the country. That same year, the Western part of the Republic of Macedonia participates with 59.4% in the total number of overnight stays in the country. Of the total number of overnight stays realized in Western Macedonia, the Southwest region contributes even 83.9%. Southwest also has the highest number of beds in the country or 59.5%. As for the mountain Laws defined by a concept for Development of the tourism and organization of the tourist spaces established by the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Macedonia, we can conclude that the frame and the level of the tourist offer gets behind the real receptive possibilities and potentials in the area.

## **DISCUSSION**

With its excellent geographic location, natural beauties and plenty of cultural and historical monuments our country presents a very interesting area. Unfortunately, many of them are not enough affirmed, urbanely formatted and even not easily accessed and mutually neatly linked (Panov, 1968).

With the planning of the space you can achieve an optimal valorization of the values for the tourism development, and one can see the opportunity for rational usage of the structures that are built, opportunity for collecting and circling the current touristic offer and it's intensifying for usage, and again it can be seen in the possibility of activating new areas with dominant natural tourist resources. Here can be found a ground for an opportunity for optimization of the future touristic development and the priorities of materializing of the current and building of new tourist places and new investments (Zikov, 2010). At the same time, managing cultural heritage requires an interdisciplinary approach, including urban and regional planning, communication and marketing, training and education, as well as the various uses of the landscape, such as agriculture, forestry, industry and tourism. Above all, cultural heritage should be an integral part of territorial planning and as such it should be linked to a wider reflection on the sustainability of regional and urban development (Pultrone, 2015).

The tourism does a root change into the geographic ambience, it vitalizes the geo ambience, harmonizes it and puts in new contents (Marinoski, 1995). The positive effects of the development of tourism are employment, achieving additional income for the population, revival of the cultural heritage and so on (Iliev & Ljakoska, 2013). The touristic development and building of the convenient material base, are very important from the aspect of preventing the migrations, as well as infrastructural equipping of the space (Budinowski, 1995).

The touristic heritage through his touristic presentation is an excellent opportunity for the realization of what is possibly more financial benefit on a national and local level (Panova, 2010). The cultural and natural heritage should be used as a basis for development of the following kinds of tourism, according the needs, as summer, winter, mountain, bath, transit, business, congress, hunting, weekend and picnic tourism (Stojmilov, 1981).

The development potential of one tourist area, beside the natural, antropogenetic and spatial opportunities, depends a lot on its tourist location (Stojmilov, 1979). The airport in Ohrid together with both border passes, St. Naum and Kafa San, give this space an international character (Marinoski, 1995).

## **CONCLUSION**

Our country is rich in great number of material evidences, represented by many archeological sites as well as written materials which point out that it is one of the cradles of the world civilization (Panov *et al.*, 2010).

Most advantageous circumstances for tourism development has the Southwest region of the republic, where the distinguished places are Ohrid and Prespa. Therefore, in the preparation of the spatial plans, whether on a national, regional or local level, the activities should be pointed towards the part how to create opportunities for optimal usage of the total touristic row base and creating possibilities how the touristic capacity and contents to be rationally classified (Zikov, 2010). The tourist development does a root change of the geospace in this region (Marinoski, 1995). Because of that, it is essential for these touristic spaces to be put into a team of technical and urban meaning, so they can fulfill the whole time to their visitors with particular contents (Stojmilov, 1979).

The transformation is present and visible through the economic effects as well as the natural and socio-psychological influence. The changes are manifested into the material base, overnight stays capacity, catering objects, changes in the number of

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beds, number of employed persons and the total trading and it has a great impact on the tourist construction and viscosity, but above all, those changes are very visible in the culture of living because the tourism and touristic demand are already counted as a lifestyle not a luxury. It becomes a need, as one of the basic elements of the living standard (Marinoski, 1995).

Beside the enormous natural and artificial potentials of the tourist offer for the foreign and domestic tourism, defined in the relationship between the tourism values and contents, and according to the trends of the international and domestic demand, it can be said that the development of the tourism in the Republic of Macedonia as in its western part still does not accomplish the predicted dynamic and the achieved level in all kind of tourism is way behind the real receptive possibilities and potential touristic demand.

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