

CONDUCTING TWO STUDIES WITHIN PRIORITY AREA 3 OF THE EU  
DANUBE REGION STRATEGY WITH 2 (TWO) LOTS:  
LOT № 1 “CARRYING OUT STUDIES ON FESTIVALS IN THE GENERAL  
CONTEXT OF DANUBE REGION TOURISM DEVELOPMENT”  
LOT № 2 “CARRYING OUT STUDIES OF THE DANUBE REGION CRUISE  
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT”

LOT № 1 “CARRYING OUT STUDIES ON FESTIVALS IN THE GENERAL CONTEXT OF DANUBE  
REGION TOURISM DEVELOPMENT”

# ANALYTICAL REPORT

02.12.2019

CONSORTIUM „GFK-2016“

*This report has been commissioned by the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria. The results and interpretations are the sole responsibility of the authors, part of the “GFK-2016” consortium team.*

*Picture on the title page: Pixabay (<https://pixabay.com>)*

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

It might sound a bit bold, but it is not wrong to call the Danube river one of those geographic regions in Europe who have made significant historic and cultural contribution towards the development of the continent. Looking back in history, many tribes and people will cross our eyesight, populating the Danube region. We will read or hear the lines and the melodies created by the poets and composers, inspired by the river. Furthermore, we will also see many examples of Danube as a natural border – for empires and nations, using it as a protector against raids, conquests and foreign influence. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, this region was already an important trading hub within the Habsburg empire, connecting Western Europe with the Balkans. After the end of the Second World War, the imposed two-pole model does not bypass the **population along the Danube river – an area where countries from both sides of the Iron Curtain are located.**



Danube river

Source: <https://pixabay.com>

The early 90s of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century mark the beginning of the so-called “transition” for the countries on the Eastern side of the line “Szczecin – Trieste”. Period of transformation that should minimise the differences between the former socialist countries and the Western democracies. Series of measures and efforts for improvement in this direction lead to the natural expansion of the European Union (EU) and the gradual inclusion of the countries from the Danube region – Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia,

Slovenia (2004), Bulgaria and Romania (2007) and Croatia (2013). As of today, Serbia and Montenegro are leading negotiations, while Bosna and Herzegovina are potential candidates. Ukraine and Moldova, despite the political turmoil, remain among the target countries of the EU’s neighbourhood policy. EU’s activities for development and consolidation of the Danube region are not only limited to the inclusion of new countries in the European family. A step in this direction is also the “**Working group of Danube region countries**”, accepted in 1990. A bit more than ten years later, in 2002 – the “**Danube cooperation process**” is established. It emphasises on the need to increase the interactions and to build on the experience gained so far from existing regional initiatives, connecting the Black sea region with EU, by emphasizing their territorial and thematic mutual cooperation<sup>1</sup>. As a result from these recommendations, as well the faster process of integration, a unified single document is adopted,

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<sup>1</sup> Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on Black Sea Synergy — A new regional cooperation initiative, OJ C 105, 25.4.2008, pp. 46–50.

focused on the current and future development of the Danube region. The **EU strategy for Danube river region (EUSDR)** is the second macro regional strategy of the EU, adopted by the European Commission in 2010 and backed by the European Council in 2011.

The EU strategy for Danube river region brings together **14 countries** located along the Danube river and covers an area in which over **112 million people** live, or one-fifth of the EU population

- **9 EU Member countries:** Austria, Bulgaria, Germany (Baden-Wurtemberg, Bavaria), Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia and Czechia.
- **5 countries outside of the EU:** Bosna and Herzegovina, Moldova, Serbia, Ukraine (Odessa, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, Carpathian region) and Montenegro.

It is divided into **12 priority areas**, supporting the **four pillars:** 1) Connecting the region 2) Protecting the environment 3) Achieving prosperity 4) Strengthening the region. The strategy is based on the many already existing networks for cooperation and the currently implemented initiatives, programmes and projects. The Strategy adapts and coordinates the tools used by the different participants in order to contribute to the integration process within the countries and also among them

In times like the current ones however, where Europe is borderless, the Danube river might again act as a natural divider – but more in the sense of economic development. As stated in the EU strategy for Danube river region “**Large differences can be observed** in the region. Some of the most successful EU regions lie within it, but also some of the poorest. More specifically, quite often there are no contacts and cooperation, both from financial and institutional aspect”<sup>2</sup>. And even though the “melting” of economic and social disparities might be a result of larger and complex coherent, systemic and sustainable strategies, measures and actions, the EU strategy for Danube river region is placing its focus namely on mitigating this problem.

In order to express this conclusion with numbers, consortium “GFK-2016” grouped the 14 countries in the river Danube region based on their political and economic state. This makes it easier to explain the identified differences, when comparing the state and the development of the festivals within the Danube region countries. The countries in the region are divided into **5 groups:**

- 1 **EU Member countries, Zone 1** –Germany (DE) and Austria (AT);
- 2 **EU Member countries, Zone 2** – Hungary (HU), Czechia (CZ), Slovakia (SK) and Slovenia (SI);
- 3 **EU Member countries, Zone 3** – Bulgaria (BG), Romania (RO) and Croatia (HR);
- 4 **Candidate countries** – Serbia (RD), Bosna and Herzegovina (BA), Montenegro (ME);

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<sup>2</sup> EU strategy for the Danube river region, p. 5

## 5 Neighbouring countries – Moldova (MD) and Ukraine (UA);

The graph below shows Gross Domestic Product per capita, expressed as purchasing power parity (PPP) in Euros, adjusted for regions (NUTS 2) of the Danube Region. The differences in economic terms are clear.

Graph 1. Gross Domestic Product per capita (in euro), expressed as purchasing power parity (PPP) in Euros, adjusted for regions (NUTS 2) of the Danube Region.

Source: Eurostat, World Bank, National Statistics Institute, Calculations and visualisation “GFK-2016”.



One of the main goals of the strategy is by 2020 all people living in the region to have better perspectives – for gaining high education, finding a job and reaching prosperity in their own hometown<sup>3</sup>. But together with the growing economic indicators of the regions along the Danube river comes the development of the culture and tourism in the region. As mentioned earlier, the Danube region definitely holds high cultural value. And its cultivation is well understood during the development of the Strategy. One of the main opportunities of the area is namely the **potential for development in the direction of nature and culture.**



Neuburg Castle, Bavaria  
Source: <https://pixabay.com>

The achievement of this objective is set out in **Priority Area 3: To promote culture and tourism, people to people contacts.** Part of EU’s policy is to include its member countries equally in the execution and support of the main European ideals and principles. Within the Strategy, the coordination of each priority area is a task for the member countries (together with the countries or regions outside of

the EU, apart from the topics on which EU makes decisions on country level, such as security, heavy crimes and organised crime). They can consort the Commission and the respective EU agencies and regional organisations. The objectives of this priority axis are grouped in 7 sub-objectives:

- 1 Develop a Danube Brand for the entire Danube Region based on already existing work;
- 2 Support the implementation of a harmonised monitoring system, dedicated to tourism, able to provide complete and comparable statistical data in all the 14 states part of the EUSDR;
- 3 Develop new and support existing Cultural Routes relevant in the Danube Region;
- 4 Develop green tourist products along the Danube Region;
- 5 To create a 'Blue Book' on Danube cultural identity;
- 6 Ensure the sustainable preservation of cultural heritage and natural values by developing relevant clusters, and networks of museums, interpretation and visitors centres within the Danube Region;
- 7 Promoting exchange and networking in the field of contemporary arts in the Danube Region.

In order to be able to track progress of the sub-objectives' implementation, the coordinating countries prepare **annual reports**.

In the reports **an accent is put on the need to improve coordination and make the involvement of the interested parties in the process more active** – "Important stakeholders from tourism and culture are in private sector and in civil society and they are not participated as much as possible at the implementation of the EUSDR. This should be a priority for PAC and SG: to increase the participation of different stakeholders<sup>4</sup>".

The statement that in the Danube region there is a lack of a strong bond between the various interested parties and institutions, as mentioned previously, is written in the Strategy. Having in mind that it has been defined as one of the main problems and one of the most important directions for the activities and tasks to take, it is the improvement of these connections that needs to be prioritised in the future. The recommendation is also supported in the Commission's Report to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, published in January 2019. The document evaluates the progress made by interested parties in the common mechanism through the implementation of programs. From a total of 95 programmes, 16 are being

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<sup>4</sup> EUSDR REPORT 2015 PRIORITY AREA 3, p. 3.

executed, planned or are open for candidacies under Priority Area 3. Despite the taken measures, the report recommends stronger actions towards inclusion of interested parties.

## 1.1 General information about the tender

The current tender aims to collect and analyse detailed, trustworthy and up-to-date information for various festivals and their importance for the cultural identity of the Danube region, which would help to achieve Priority Area 3 from the Danube Strategy, related to “Creating a Blue Book of Danube cultural identity”.

In its core, the “**Blue book of Danube cultural identity**” needs to be a combination of things: surveying cultural differences between countries from the Danube region, developing a platform which includes information for existing and future cultural events, as well as summarising them in one shared database. One of the “tasks” related with the creation of the Blue book is also stimulating the cooperation between former, current and future European capitals of culture. Of course, last but not least comes the implementation of various marketing approaches, popularising the activities, etc.

*Within the current report, the research team of Consortium “GFK-2016” will accent, as much as the Technical specification allows, on the **present cultural characteristics between countries in the Danube region, connected with festival tourism**. Focus will be put also on the **value of the festivals in terms of development, development, preservation and maintenance of the cultural asset** in these regions and countries. It is also essential to look at **existing links between different stakeholders at regional, national and international level**. The latter will also help to formulate adequate recommendations which would aid the activities of the coordinators of Priority Axis 3 to mitigate as much as possible the existing “gaps” mentioned in the Strategy and its accompanying documents.*

## 1.2 Scope

Within the scope of the current report are 14 countries, identified as part of the Danube region in the Strategy.

*Figure 1. Map of the countries, included in the EU Strategy for Danube river region*



As it becomes clear, within the scope of the project fall also countries who have no direct access to Danube river. Their connection with the region is justified with the fact that the drainage pool of Danube river is within their borders, as follows: Bosna and Herzegovina (4.6%), Czechia (2.9%), Slovenia (2.0%), Montenegro (0.9%).

Furthermore, the two biggest tributaries of Danube river go through their territories:

- **Sava river** – the right tributary of Danube river, flowing through Slovenia, Croatia, Bosna and Herzegovina and Serbia;
- **Morava river** – the left tributary of Danube river, flowing through Czechia, Slovakia and Austria.

Having in mind the aim of the project, the current analysis focuses on the regions that are directly connected with Danube river and its two biggest inflows.

## 1.3 Methodology

The survey includes two methods for collecting and analysing information: ① Desk research and ② Quantitative and qualitative surveys among the target groups

The desk research includes review, selection, collection and analysis of existing sources of “ready” and accurate data. The existing information is **categorised by activities, as defined in the tender**. This was then used as a base to develop the questionnaires for the quantitative and qualitative surveys among the identified target groups.

In parallel with this preparatory period, a database of contacts for the people to be included in the study was also collected.

The following target groups were interviewed:

- Festival organisers, quantitative interview: n=6
- Festival organisers, qualitative study: n=4
- Representatives of local administration, qualitative study: n=4
- Organisers and representatives of local administration in Bulgaria, in-depth interviews - n=5

**The total number of interviewed respondents is 19.**

The questionnaires for the surveys among all three groups have different sections and include the following themes:

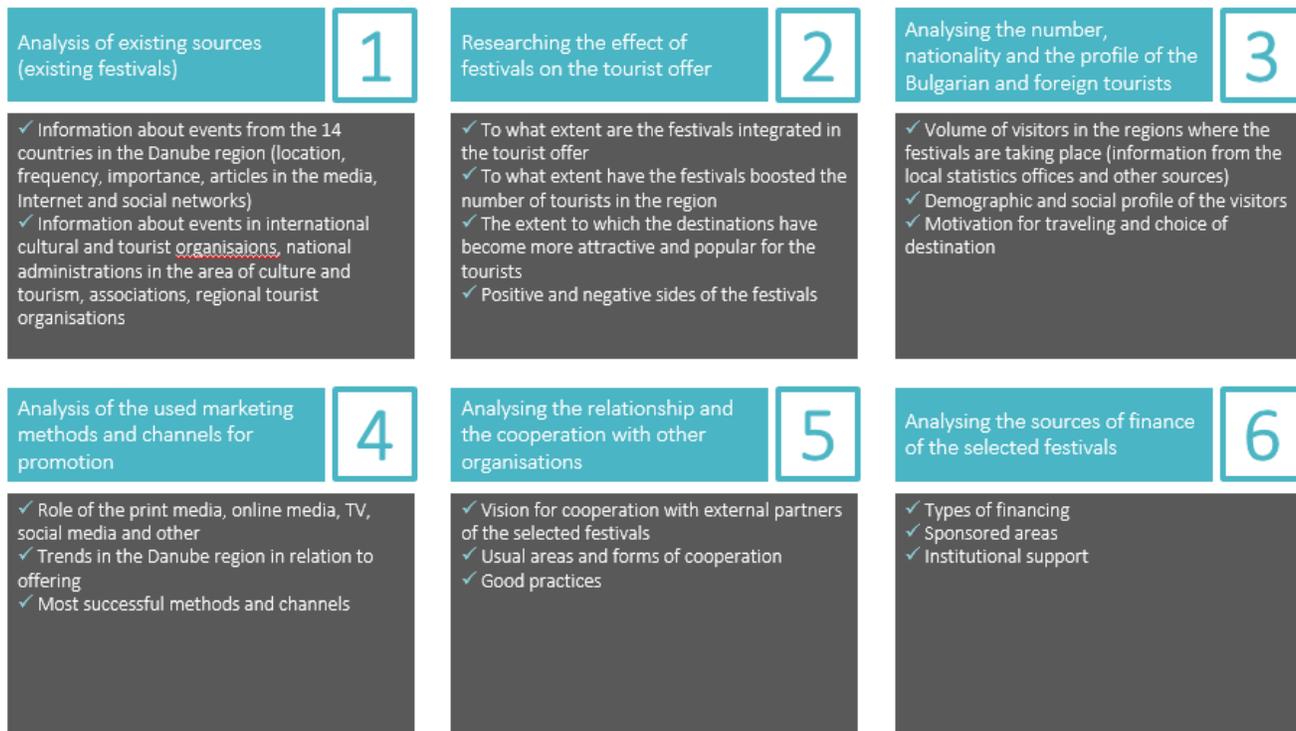
- **General information** (location, frequency, number of visitors, ticket price);
- **Profile of the visitors** (share of local/foreign visitors, nationality of foreign visitors);
- **Danube relevance** (festival theme, festival type, connection with Danube river, to what extent the festival contributes to the development and the preservation of the cultural identity of the region);
- **Impact on the tourist supply** (accessibility, infrastructure);
- **Marketing methods and channels for promotion** (channels for information sharing, availability / size of advertising budget, presence on social networks);
- **Cooperation with other organisations** (number and type of institutions, taking part in organising the festival, areas of cooperation, evaluation of the cooperation, obstacles for increased cooperation);
- **Financing sources** (type of fundings, expense allocation by areas);
- **Programme’s visibility**



## 1.4 Activities

The following activities took place during the execution of the contract:

Figure 2. Activities



Note: Activity 2 and 3 are presented in one chapter in the report, due to their similarity.

## 1.5 Survey limitations

- **Lack of interest/ability to take part** in the qualitative and quantitative surveys, by the interested parties. A problem that seriously limits the gathering of similar information on “festival” level and making conclusions.
- **Lack of standardised statistical information** in the official sources for the Danube region countries. The countries who are not part of the EU have official data for various indicators, different to those available in Eurostat for the EU countries.

## 1.6 Sources of information

### *STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS:*

- European Union Strategy for the Danube region
- Action plan part of the European Union Strategy for the Danube region
- EU Strategy for the Danube region. A single answer to common challenges. Panorama inforegio, European Union, Regional Policy
- European Commission report on the added value of macro-regional strategies
- Council of Europe conclusions on the added value of macro-regional strategies
- Report from the European Commission on the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region
- European Commission report on the added value of macro-regional strategies
- Council of Europe conclusions on the added value of macro-regional strategies
- Exploring macro-regional strategies and their relation to cohesion policy
- Report from the European Commission for the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions (final report) on the implementation of the European Union's macro-regional strategies
- European Commission's working report accompanying the final report on the implementation of the European Union's macro-regional strategies
- Reports on the implementation of Priority Axis 3 of the Danube Strategy

### *OFFICIAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION:*

- Eurostat
- World Bank
- National statistical institute, Serbia
- National statistical institute, Monte Negro
- National statistical institute, Croatia
- National statistical institute, Bosna and Herzegovina
- National statistical institute, Moldova
- National statistical institute, Ukraine
- National statistical institute, Bulgaria

## *OTHERS*

- Webpage of EUSDR - <https://danube-region.eu/>
- Festival tourism – The concept, Key functions and dysfunctions in the context of tourism geography studies, Waldemar Cudny, 2013

## 2 KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Most of the festivals are of musical character. They are organised in the summer, in the open and in close proximity to the river. The main idea is to use the “magic” of the water basin, of the nature. Undoubtedly, this is a plus for popularising the area and the visitor can feel that he had a good time, but this can also have negative consequences for Danube and the surrounding areas.
- At this moment, however, no major occurrences of “destruction” of the habitat around Danube river have been registered. All interviewed organisers are adamant that all rules are being followed. Nevertheless, it is recommended to communicate more often the measures that are in place to make sure the environment is protected when organising public events.
- There are quite significant cultural differences between the separate groups of countries when it comes to organising festivals. The EU member countries, Zone 1 (Austria and Germany), logically have more finances, established traditions, wider participation of interested parties and more tourists. All this contributes to the organisation of festivals related to the Danube river, which are among the most important ones in the cultural calendar of Europe.
- At the same time in those countries we see the ability to organise an event which incorporates itself in the overall vibe of the town, its historic value and natural advantage. Those are the so-called “art” festivals which don’t need a specific stage or a dedicated project in order to take place. They are “living festivals”, which are randomly experienced by the tourist on the streets of the city, filled with musicians, actors and artists, who leave a feeling of something magical with the ease of their performance.
- Similar events can be seen also in countries like Hungary, Czechia, Slovakia and even Croatia, but it’s almost impossible to see them in Bulgaria, Romania and Moldova.
- When it comes to the latter three countries, the festivals around Danube river are associated with showing the folklore of the given destination. Preserving the local traditions that are related to the dance, music and food are of course an integral part of the Strategy’s goals. But in most cases even if not in all, the so-called “folklore festivals” only limit themselves to attracting participants from the surrounding area, the visitors of the festival are either people who are passing by and don’t stay, or are relatives of the participants, and the participation of foreign guests is obstructed by limited financial resources. All of this creates the feeling that a “private” festival is being organised, aimed at preserving the cultural heritage but who remains closed for outside visitors.

- More active involvement of local administrations in attracting local artists who can in turn boost the interest of the tourists is recommended. And with regard to the festivals, it would be good to build a creative system and programme to make folk festivals interesting not only to the participants and their relatives.
- More work needs to be done for the creation and implementation of joint projects between the countries of the Danube region. A good example of such a project that is no longer taking place is the “Blue Week” - in which municipalities from Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia marked the "Danube Day" together, in a well-managed and synchronised way.
- It is recommended for such joint projects to be carried out between regions and municipalities whose traditions, culture and language are closely related. This is especially valid for countries whose festival traditions are not that well developed.
- Areas that have historically had conflicts (Serbia-Croatia; Serbia-Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnia and Herzegovina-Croatia) should definitely work towards organizing joint projects.
- Countries included in the Strategy, but without direct access to the Danube, expectedly have significantly fewer festivals related to the topic. It is advisable to intensify the activities aimed at their inclusion, such as making the annual “ Danube Day” more present in their festival calendar.
- Novi Sad will be one of the European cultural capitals in 2020. In this context, joint activities can be undertaken to promote cultural heritage in the Danube Region, and in particular, its Balkan part.
- Events that are organised to commemorate “Danube Day” may be defined as internal. They are aimed mainly at the younger generation (mainly pupils) and are educational and entertaining.
- The additional events that are organised during the “Danube Day”, such as concerts and events, undoubtedly help to attract tourists and integrate the product into the tourist offer, but it seems that their scope needs to be broadened. Taking into account the territorial, linguistic and cultural proximity of the countries, there should be a joint celebrations of the “Danube Day” with all neighbouring countries.
- The major festivals mainly focus their attention on mitigating the potential negative consequences from organizing events - pollution, destruction of natural resources, abuse of alcohol, etc. It is important to communicate to the public, especially when the festivals are outdoors, the need to protect the so-called "festival space" clean and intact, and also to emphasise on the consequences that the visitors might have to suffer if they don't follow the rules.

- The festival cultures and calendars of both Romania and Bulgaria seem to lack a diverse festival, which includes various music, art and handcraft events. Having in mind the infrastructural, cultural and inter-institutional links between the two countries that have already been established, an event that is similar to Danube Art Festival in Vukovar could be easily organised.
- The highest number of overnight stays (which is significantly higher than other countries in the region) is registered in the countries of the EU member countries, Zone 1;
- We can easily notice the low share of visits to the Danube regions in Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia. This can be considered acceptable in Croatia, given that the focus in this country is primarily on the development of maritime tourism. However, for Bulgaria and Romania, such situation should not be easily accepted, given their role as coordinators of Priority Area 3;
- Measures that can be taken by the local and state administrations of Romania and Bulgaria in order to increase foreign festival tourists (and not only foreign) could be aimed at:
  - o Promoting joint festival projects (for example resuming “Blue Week”);
  - o Participation in pan-European Danube projects;
  - o Supporting financially the municipal festivals, which would allow them to invite participants from other countries;
  - o Supporting (financially and administratively) the creation of a big festival, that would be very significant for this part of the Danube Region, and which will become one of the main events of the cultural calendar (such as “Exit” in Novi Sad and the Danube Festivals in Germany and Austria) ;
- The 42 festivals covered in this analysis share one common feature: all events are promoted through the most current modern method of information sharing - social networks;
- Based on the discussions with the organisers and representatives of the local organization, as well as the review of the Facebook pages of the festivals, it can be concluded that relatively little effort is invested in the support of the Facebook pages of the festivals. Exceptions are the events in Austria, Novi Sad and Germany, which attract hundreds of thousands of people a year;
- Creating a profile / page / event for each country that organised a “Danube Day” and making sure that the Facebook activity is relatively high will significantly contribute to the promotion of the International “Danube Day”;

- The social media tools Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest are quite popular as well. These channels are also extremely convenient for promoting festivals - they allow you to maintain event channels and share photos and videos among a large audience;
- Festivals that have regional importance and are mainly targeted at the local population should be promoted in local newspapers, radio and other regional media;
- An additional step to attract foreign tourists is the usage of tourist guides, tourist-focused websites, as well as printing and distributing leaflets and posters;
- The EU Member countries in Zones 1 and 2 have a well-developed system for cooperation – quite often, a high number of stakeholders are involved in the organization of a festival;
- However, this is very rarely valid for countries like Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, where the organization of a festival is limited to the engagement of one or two stakeholders.
- It is also very important to stimulate relationships between the countries in the Danube region - especially when countries without direct access to the Danube are included. The festivals that are organised on the territory of these countries have weak connection with the Danube's cultural heritage and identity. Therefore, it is recommended to build co-operation between countries such as Czechia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and their neighbours for the joint organization of festivals and / or “Danube Day”.
- Major festivals usually receive funding from a variety of sources and their budgets are managed by specialists, and a dedicated department is put in place to manage the sponsors. Such festivals are the “International Danube Festival” in Ulm, “Festival of the Danube Island” in Vienna, “EXIT” in Novi Sad and, in part, the “Bratislava Summer Festival”;
- The most widespread way of organizing festivals is through an EU programme. However, such a generalisation does not always apply for countries like Bulgaria and Romania, where the funding is most often provided by the Municipality.

### 3 FESTIVAL ANALYSIS IN THE WIDER CONTEXT OF TOURIST DEVELOPMENT OF THE DANUBE REGION



Ulm, Germany  
Source: <https://pixabay.com>

#### What is a “festival”?

There are multiple definitions in the science literature of what do we call “festival”. Some of the authors define it as an “event, which is created for an especially festive occasion, jubilee, remembrance days or commemorations or by a specific choice of performers” (Kutin, 2004). Others, like Gibson and Stuard (Austrian geographers) add an interesting nuance to the definition. According to them, a festival had to meet at least one

of the following criteria: 1) the word ‘festival’ has to be used in the event’s name 2) the event has to be irregular, taking place

once, or once or twice a year 3) has to put emphasis on celebrating, promoting or exploring some aspects of local culture 4) being an unusual meeting point for people with certain cultural activity, or of a specific subcultural identification (Gibson and Stuard, 2009).

Having in mind the variety of definitions, the research team of „GFK-2016” partnership will use the definition given by the Supplier in the Technical specification:

*“Holidays, based on religious or cultural traditions and customs, celebrations of important people or events or traditional cultures/trades, as well as traditional fairs and holidays”*

*Falasi, 1995*

To avoid limiting the scope of the analysis, to the “official definition” we have added parts of other interpretations – related to the degree to which the festival is promoted and the value it holds for the community, its frequency and the elements that attract visitors.

#### What else should we mention?

In order to expand the view of the team, we have also used information in scientific literature, connected with festivals. It plays the role of added value, which aids the better understanding and consecutively – the deeper and more accurate analysis on the existence of festivals and their influence In the Danube region. Within the report, we take into account the following specifics:

1 The festivals and their importance is defined by their so-called “tourist space” – basically speaking, it consists of 4 elements – natural heritage (including resources, created by nature and comprising the tourist activities of a certain region; cultural heritage (including the tourist resources, created by humans); infrastructure (which help the natural resources to become more accessible and attractive for the tourists) and the human element, as in the “subjects” of the tourist space, doing certain activities in tourism (Włodarczyk, 2009)

2 Organising a certain festival brings given functions and dysfunctions (Włodarczyk, 2009) with itself. The festivals can promote ideas, related to preserving the environment or the cultural heritage, stimulating a sport activity or a cause, etc. On the other hand, it can lead to series of negative consequences:

- On environmental level – pollution, damaging green areas, other;
- On cultural level – losing authenticity of the local and regional culture heritage, adapting the festival to the tourists’ needs; presenting “fake cultural heritage” to satisfy the expectations;
- On infrastructure level – wasting infrastructure; destruction and vandalism;
- On “people” level – possible conflict between visitors/locals; possible exclusion of certain social group, due to lack of access points for people with disabilities or excluded due to ethnical and financial reasons; excessive use of alcohol and other opiates.

*Led by the definition of tourist space, the current analysis evaluates the listed four elements. This was we ensure comparability of the separate festivals by creating a unified scoring model.*

### Which festivals were included?

The selection of the festivals was based on a set of criteria, aimed at making it objective and guaranteeing its effectiveness. The list of criteria includes (but is not limited to) the following:

#### 1 Mandatory criteria

- **Geographic requirement** – the festival needs to be held at one of more of the 14 countries in the Danube region;
- **Belonging to the Danube region** – direct connection with Danube river and the local cultural heritage/ traditions/ folklore;
- **Importance for the cultural identity of the Danube region** - festival’s contribution towards protecting/popularising the specific cultural heritage; contribution for the shaping of a specific/unique cultural image of the region.

## 2 Other criteria, including:

- **Uniqueness** – events, whose theme, concept, etc. makes them unique for the region;
- **Frequency** – festivals with traditions in their organisation, as opposed to single events, organised episodically;
- **Scale** – festivals with international profile and/or those that attract visitors from outside the given country;
- **Duration** – festivals/cultural events that manage to attract visitors' attention for a longer period of time, as opposed to single, shorter events;
- **Time of the year** – when the time of the year helps to boost tourist visits outside of high season;

### 3.1 Analysis of existing sources

In this section of the report we have presented a brief information for each of the festivals included in the survey, more specifically:

- 1 **General information for the event** – location, frequency, importance, articles in media, Internet and social media.
- 2 **Information in official sources** – national administration in the area of culture and tourism, associations, regional tourist organisations..

A total of **42 festivals** have been included (3 in each of the 14 countries in the Danube region), which correspond to the above mentioned criteria. The analysis of the festivals is presented by groups of countries (EU member countries, zones 1, 2 and 3; Potential member countries and Neighbouring countries).

#### 3.1.1 EU member countries, zone 1



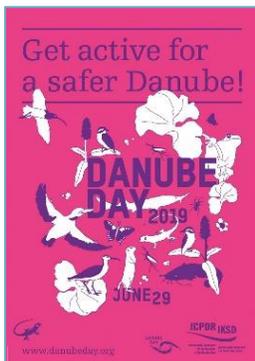
*Donauinselfest (Vienna, Austria)*  
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/Donauinselfest>

#### AUSTRIA

Unequivocally, one of the biggest events on the Danube river delta is **Donauinselfest**. A music festival which is organised on the territory of a Danube island in Vienna. The 36<sup>th</sup> edition took place in 2019, attracting numerous visitors and participants from multiple countries. The location, the various musical formations that visit it have turned it into one of the “mandatory” events Europe’s festival scene. The charm of the surrounding river and the fact that

**Donauinselfest** takes place in one of the most visited by tourists cities in Europe definitely contributes to its image of

a “unique” events. This festival is an example of how a region has successfully managed to use its popularity among tourists for the development of the festival tourism. Information for **Donauinselfest** can be found both on the official webpage of the festival, but also in the tourist guidebooks and city guides online. Such wide publicity is without a doubt a positive influence on accepting Danube river as a place to organise cultural events. At the same time, attracting large crowds to the festival and other tourists could blur the feeling of “belonging” to Danube river. It can be seen as a place to organise an event and take advantage of the national resources instead of building a “relationship” with the river.



*On 29 June 1994, 13 countries in the Danube Region and the European Commission signed the International Convention for the Protection of the Danube River. Ten years later, in 2004, these 13 countries decided to mark the anniversary with the launch of a new tradition - the organization and celebration of the **Danube Day**.*

*Today, after more than 15 years, this tradition has not been interrupted, and these countries are expanding their activities to cultivate and promote the cultural heritage related to the Danube and the Danube region.*

In 2019, the **Danube Day in Vienna** takes place with over 17 interactive information points, presenting the bio and cultural richness of Danube river as an environmental treasure. Despite its smaller scale, The Danube Day is a popular event. It is especially important that this day is targeted at the youngest generation. In 2019 over 1000 kids took part in various creative activities. Such initiative definitely has a huge impact on building and sustaining efforts to protect and treasure the Danube cultural heritage. Despite its wide spread though, the Danube Day has to establish itself in the more popular tourist and cultural guides and to get out of its image as “festival for the locals”. Most often information for the event (outside of the official Danube Day webpage) can be found in specialised regional sources, which makes it important only for those who live in the area.

„**Classic on Danube**“ does not have the same tradition in its organisation as Danube Day and Donauinsselfest. This year (2019) Classic on Danube took place for the second time as an extension of the “Austrian Piano Open” competition. Despite this, the festival plays an important role in sustaining Vienna’s formed image of a “Musical capital of Europe”. The change of the competition’s name is a sign of Danube’s significance for the cultural promotion in the region.



International Danube Festival, Ulm  
Source: <https://tourismus.ulm.de>

## GERMANY

Germany – the country known worldwide for its festivals does not fail the expectations when it comes to organising events related to Danube River.

**International Danube Festival** is organised every two years, in the cities Ulm and Neu-Ulm, which are naturally separated by Danube river. The fact that the 10-day

festival takes place on two shores and of course in the river itself is a symbol of the cultural exchange and partnership among the countries in the Danube region.

The festival's programme is varied and encompasses activities from music, dance, literature and others. The key event is the so-called "Culinary market", during which the culinary, music and dance specifics of 10 countries from the Danube region are presented.

Information for the event is widely distributed – from social networks (Facebook) through Internet websites of local, national and international editions to webpages of local and international tourist organisations who promote actively the event.

**Beim Bürgerfest** does not have the same scale as International Danube festival, but it is definitely coming close to its atmosphere. Each year in July the streets of the Old town in Ingolstadt are filled with musicians, bands, artists, illusionists, jugglers and dancers:

*"During the town's holiday, the north and south banks of the Danube are joined. On the Danube Day, every year for the last ten years, on the first subsequent holiday weekend, there is an organised swimming event in the waters of the Danube. This tradition has its roots in the annual Danube swimming competition, which took place in the 1920s and was organised by the Danube Recreation Club."*

*Representative of a local administration, interview*

Information for the event can be found in the local press and Internet editions, Facebook and Instagram. Having in mind that Ingolstadt is a popular tourist place with about 3.5 million visitors in 2018 (based on information given to us by a Local administration representative), popularising the festival in local tour guides and the town's website is enough to attract visitors to the festival.

**Neubürger Schlossfest** started its existence in 1976 and is the largest Renaissance festival in the German-speaking countries. It takes place every two years in the end of June – beginning of July. The main idea of the festival is to recreate life in the castle during the Renaissance period, when Neuburg was the capital of Pfalz-Neuburg country. Together with the historic restoration, the festival includes tournament games and numerous concerts. The highlight of the event is the so-called "Danube Fire Theater", held on the second Saturday of the festival. The event ends with a procession around the city, the so-called "Schlossfest-Umzug".

Such festivals are very popular not only in Western Europe, but also among countries on the Eastern side of the Iron Curtain. An example is the historic recreation "Baba Vida" in Vidin. The Neuburg festival

is a good example of how an alternative festival can be organised, which is aimed at keeping the cultural and historic heritage of the regions along Danube river.

### 3.1.2 EU member countries, Zone 2



„Danube Day“, Hungary

Source:

<https://environmentalrisks.danube-region.eu>

#### HUNGARY

In Hungary – a country where Danube river finds a special place in the culture and social life as it flows through the capital Budapest, “**Danube Day**” is quite popular. A few events aimed at informing, promoting and popularising Danube and its contribution towards the preservation of the cultural heritage were held in 2018. A very important feature is connecting people from various nationalities along the Danube.

Some of the countries that take part in “Danube Day” limit it only to a local level. In the town of Érsekcsanád, it’s a tradition to hold a common celebration between Serbs and Hungarians, who share with each other the cultural specifics of their region - music and cuisine. It is precisely such activities that are in the centre of the Strategy – there is a clear awareness of the difficulties that local communities would encounter if their goal is to organise numerous festivals with guests from different countries. It is indeed better to put an emphasis on the smaller but compact local events aimed at promoting the cultural specifics of border areas

Esztergom is a town in North Hungary, which sits on the right shore of Danube river, forming the border with Slovakia. Since 2015, in May or June the streets of the Old town become an open stage and multiple artists, actors and musicians perform their shows in front of the pedestrians. These few days are part of the **Comedium Corso festival**.

Information about this event is shared mostly via Internet – tourist websites of the region and social media. According to local administration, the event is important for the preservation and promotion of the town’s cultural heritage, who’s location suggests interesting cultural traditions.

Another festival taking place near the Danube River is the **Festival of the Chili Pepper**, in Nagymaros (Nagymarosi Csípős Fesztivál). As the name gives away, the festival is aimed at presenting the local

culinary traditions. Each year, in the last Saturday of August, local producers and lovers of the famous Hungarian chili pepper showcase their production on the market in Nagymaros. Despite its non-traditional theme, the festival contributes to the enrichment of the cultural heritage of Danube river and preserving the local traditions in every aspect. Furthermore, the playful name helps attract tourists in the region and promote alternative local traditions.



„Danube Day“, Czechia

Source:

<http://www.danubeday.org/czech-republic>

## CZECHIA

Czechia is one of the countries part of the Strategy, but without direct access to Danube river. Nevertheless, the festivals that are being organised in close proximity to Morava river – the left tributary of the Danube - are an important part of the study of events in the general context of tourism development of the Danube region. In this regard, Czechia can be presented as a good example of 'looking' beyond the geographical borders of the region and realizing the importance of all peripheral territories.

In Czechia, the “**Danube Day**” does not boast with the same scale as the event in Germany or Hungary. Nevertheless, the festival manages to achieve its goals. In Prague, during the Open doors day of the Water Science Institute, various educational and interactive events for local schoolkids take place, connected with the importance of the water basins.

**The Summer Film School of Uherske Hradiste** (Letní filmová škola Uherské Hradiště) is an event which took place for the 45<sup>th</sup> time in 2019. What’s specific about it is that it aims to deepen the knowledge of movie and history lovers with the help of attractive methods. In the context of the tourist development of Danube region, the summer film school helps to build a connection and preference for the Morava river, through events and educational events in the open.

The charity festival “**DJs 4 Charity**” in Hodonin, Czechia, can be used as an idea for future activities to promote the cultural heritage of Danube region. The event is organised since 2012 and attracts thousands of fans of electronic music each summer. Its location - right next to Morava river – adds value to its attractiveness. Having in mind the large discrepancies in the economic situation between the countries in the Danube region, initiating a festival with a charity spin for kids in tough circumstances,

for example, will help minimise those differences and create a cause to unite the population of the region.



„Danube Day“, Slovakia

Source:

<http://www.danubeday.org/slovakia>

## SLOVAKIA

By tradition, **Danube Day** has been taking place in the town of Gabčíkovo Dam, every June since 2004.

The celebrations include organising river cruises on Danube river, demonstrations with rescue dogs, massive show with a foam, ecological raffles and competitions for kids. An important part of the celebration are educational programmes for the youngest visitors, which adds Slovakia to one of the countries with developed system for preservation and sustainability of the Danube heritage.

**Bratislavský majáles** is an open-air festival, taking place in Bratislava in the summer, since 2008.

Traditionally, it opens the season of the Bratislava cultural and social events for the wider audience.

Each year it encompasses attractive live concerts on the Danube river shore, discussion forum “Café Europe”, programmes for kids and demonstrations of non-traditional sports take place. The festival finishes with the so-called “Fireworks of the year”, on the Danube River. With its scale, the event is an important part of the cultural calendar of the town. Since it takes place right next to the river, Bratislavský majáles contributes significantly to the river’s inclusion in the context of Bratislava’s tourist development.

The organisers devote a special attention to minimise the negative consequences, to which the open-air festival could lead.

On the Internet website of Bratislavský majáles , we can see rules on alcohol consumption, environmental protection, the explanation that the festival’s territory falls under NATURA 2000 and it is described why and how this is important.



**NATURA 2000** - Európska únia chráni aj slovenskú prírodu. Fotografie zo slovenských parkov a chránených území.

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**SAMI SEBOU.** Aktivistický fotožurnalistický projekt Doroty Holubovej o transrodových ľuďoch na Slovensku.

**GAMBRINUS SRDCOVKA** - O dokonalejšiu atmosféru počas koncertov sa postará spoločnosť **Plzeňský Prazdroj**, ktorá zmení dunajské nábřeží na zónu zábavy a skvelého piva. Po vlahšej premiére je po druhý raz hlavným partnerom festivalu značka **GAMBRINUS**. Na majáles privedie svoj originálny pojazdný výčap, ktorého dizajn kopíruje úžitné konceptové podniky **Gambrinus Srdcovka**. K dispozícii bude nepasterizovaný Gambrinus priamo z tanku, pivo s bohatou penou bude chutit presne tak, ako by ste ho pili priamo v pivovare. V **Pilsner Urquell** zóne vám svoje majstrovstvo čapovania predvedú aktuálni Mastrí Bartendri a svoje čapovacie schopnosti a rolu výčapníka si môžete vyskúšať aj na vlastnej koži vďaka škole čapovania. Súčasťou zón budú zaujímavé sprievodné aktivity a súťaže, ako napr. **stánok "Rešpektuj 18"** alebo **simulátor voľného pádu od Birellu**. Osvieži vás ponuka ciderov Frisco s novinkou Spritz a ochutnať budete môcť aj aktuálne pívne špeciály **Voľby Sládkov**. Tento rok budete môcť prvýkrát vychutnať aj **novinku Šarší Ejl**, uvarený pekne po našom a čapovaný z originálneho historického Citroenu.

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**UDRŽUJTE FESTIVALOVÝ AREÁL ZELENÝ A ČISTÝ**

Aj festival Bratislavský majáles chce byť šetrný k životnému prostrediu a po vzore veľkých etablovaných festivalov (Pohoda, Grape, Colours of Ostrava) sme sa rozhodli opäť pristúpiť k používaniu zálohovaných vratných pohárov. Poháre s objemom 0,5 l a 0,3 l budú zálohované za € 2,- a vrátne na ktoromkoľvek výčapnom mieste v gastrozóne Gambrinus Srdcovka. Veríme, že tým spoločne prispievame k väčšej čistote a udržiavaniu poriadku v areáli festivalu po celé tri dni. O to viac, že majáles sa koná prakticky v centre hlavného mesta v jednom z jeho najkrajších zákutí. V spolupráci s mestskou spoločnosťou Odvoz a likvidácia odpadu a s (OLO) bude v areáli festivalu k dispozícii aj 5 recyklačných staníc so 120 l kontajnermi a nádobami na separovaný zber odpadu.

“CARRYING OUT STUDIES ON FESTIVALS IN THE GENERAL CONTEXT OF DANUBE REGION TOURISM DEVELOPMENT” | p. 28

„GFK-2016“ Consortium

The information is presented in a way that would attract the visitor and would make him read it. The more relaxed style helps understand the text better. It is advised to introduce the practice in all festivals which are organised close to the Danube river.

*Festival rules of Bratislavský majáles*  
Source:  
<https://www.bratislavskymajales.sk/festival>

**Lake UP** is a festival that has been taking place only for two years in Komarno. Its aim is to help increase the standard of living of the local population and the region by organising music events, sports activities and other activities that would "lift the spirits" of the small Slovak town. Its value to the Danube region is passive, but it is a good example of local initiatives that contribute to better life in the city. It is held in the summer, and information about it can be found on the local websites and social networks.



„Danube Day“, Slovenia  
Source:  
<http://www.danubeday.org/slovenia>

## SLOVENIA

In Slovenia, the international **Danube Day** is celebrated in a much more modest way, mainly because of the remoteness of the country from the Danube region. Despite this, in 2019, local water conservation and management structures used the opportunity to hold conferences or meetings that can contribute to the development of this industry. An example of this is the “Live with water International Conference”, held at the Podsreda / Bistrica of Sotly, between May 31 and June 1. It was attended by over 80 teachers from Slovenia and Croatia, whose aim is to exchange good practices on how the topic of climate change and the importance of water resources can be included more often in the curriculum.

An important highlight of the event is the Eighth Meeting of the Youth Parliament, aimed at the Sava River Basin. The young people from the organization discuss important topics about the present and about the development of the region in the context of the river.

Of course, "Danube Day" does not go by without organizing special events for the youngest generation, through which it seeks to nurture and maintain an understanding of the environmental conservation and knowledge of its importance.

Similar to other events that constitute the Danube International Day, information about it and the program is available on the official website of the project and on social networks.

The **Ljubljana Festival** cannot be included in the list of festivals that have a specific connection with the Danube region. However, it is a good example of organizing and hosting events, part of the cultural program of a European capital. The Ljubljana Summer Festival contributes to maintaining the cultural heritage of the city by presenting ballet, opera and concert performances, musicals, chamber and symphony concerts.

Is it a type of festival that is often missing in countries like Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine and their territories along the Danube River and which will undoubtedly help to promote cultural diversity.

The festival is widely popularized in tourist guides and tourist websites, and the site of the city municipality actively promotes it.

**Caravan of Local Craft Breweries** is a festival organised with the support of the EU, aimed at promoting local street food and craft beer. The event is held every summer and its theme is a good example of a diverse and attractive way to attract tourists to a given area.

### 3.1.3 EU Member countries, Zone 3



*Fiery Danube, Tutrakan*

Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/OgneniatDunavTutrakan/>

#### **BULGARIA**

„The Fiery Danube" is a festival organised on the territory of Tutrakan municipality for the last 8 years. It takes place for 5 days in the summer. What's typical for this event is that it combines various 'themed' nights - classical music, ethno, pop, rap and rock, with participants representing groups from all over the world. However, such diversity does not deter visitors - on the contrary. The municipality, with a population of about 10 thousand, manages to attract almost as many guests as the city population itself:

*„In the first year, according to information by the Tourism bureau and the History museum between 600 and 800 tourists have visited Tutrakan. And now, just for "Fiery Danube, they are between 10 and 15,000.."*

*(Organiser, interview)*

Undoubtedly, such a festival is a success for a municipality, with the size and options of Tutrakan. The organisers manage to skilfully use the added value brought by the river to the promotion of the event. Even the name itself - "The Fiery Danube", suggests something mystical, magical and close to nature. Despite the diversity of music genres, the theme of the Danube as a natural and cultural heritage has not been overlooked.

Yes, the river is the main resource around which an event is organised, but the presentation, preservation and promotion of the traditions of the area do not remain in the background - "our" ensemble, the Bulgarian one, is an integral part of the program of the event. This is how the organisers try not to "lose the authenticity of local and regional cultural heritage, by adapting the festival to the needs of the tourists."

**The official sources** contain information about the festival mainly in the local structures - the site of the Municipality and local tourist organizations. However, many media outlets - regional, local and social networks - did not miss reporting on the event. Social media is at the heart of promoting the event and attracting visitors from all over the country.

In another Bulgarian municipality located along the Danube River - **Vidin**, the festivals are held mainly under the "hat" of the Municipality. The events are mostly "folk", with very limited financial and human resources. This is common for most municipalities in Bulgaria - folklore dances are popular with the population, they are spectacular, they attract participants, folklore groups exist almost everywhere, and festivals can be organised on their own funds or with a small budget.

Having in mind the above, the **connection of the festivals with the Danube river is via the preservation and maintenance of the cultural asset in the region - by presenting typical local dances and clothing.**

Vidin Municipality organises two folk festivals of this type – for local participants and for international. People talk with great nostalgia about the time when the International Folklore Festival attracted participants from countries along the Danube:

*"You said that at the beginning it was bigger. People from what countries visited the festival? "*

*"Countries along the Danube river, like Hungary, Slovakia, Serbia, Romania, but we have included others too. We've had participants from Turkey, Macedonia, Mexico and Poland."*

*(Organiser, interview)*

But today, 12 years after the first international festival was held, the event only has guests from neighbouring Serbia and Romania. Despite its lower base, the festival manages to raise the "spirit" of the city, gathering around 1,000 people in the park next to Danube.

Information about the event is limited mainly to the local structures - the site of the Municipality, local media and posters.

The situation is slightly different in another Bulgarian municipality - Rousse. Just like Vidin, Rousse also has a direct road connection with Romania. However, the earlier existence of the Danube Bridge 1, instead of the Vidin-Calafat Bridge, has a clear effect in terms of the established links between the Bulgarian and Romanian cities. It is also important to clarify that Rousse seems to be more active when it comes to organizing festivals:

*What type of festivals does the organisation that you represent organise? Which ones are the most popular, the most heavily visited?*

*"I can list a lot of the ones that I organise with my humble team. These are: Ballet Festival, Dance, International. We do an international competition for drawing and photography, we hold a cheerleader international festival, we hold an international youth folk dance festival. Apart from that, we also have those of national and regional importance. And we organise competitions-recitals "So that Bulgaria exists", "National choir meeting", Youth festival called "Music and colors"*

*(organiser , interview)*



„Blue week“

Source: <http://blueweek.org>

also important to clarify that this festival was last held for the last time in 2016 after 5 annual celebrations.

Bulgarian Danube Day is celebrated in most municipalities along the Danube River in Bulgaria. In Rousse, however, local organisers developed the idea and, following the recommendations of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, managed, in cooperation with Serbia and Romania, to create the **"Blue Week"** project. It is

Despite this, its importance to preserve and develop the cultural heritage of the Danube River is significant. Which makes the event a clear example of functioning international and inter-organizational cooperation between the Danube countries. Cultural, territorial (in the case of Romania) and linguistic (in the case of Serbia) proximity helped to create a working product that included cycling tours, kayaking tours, photo exhibitions, concerts, wine tasting and more. The resumption of Blue Week is strongly recommended.



„Danube Day“, Romania  
Source: <http://www.danubeday.org/romania>

## ROMANIA

Romania, together with Bulgaria, coordinates the execution of Priority area 3: **To promote culture and tourism, people to people contacts** for the EU Strategy for Danube river region. Furthermore, while Romania was chair of the EU Assembly,

important topics related to the development of the Danube region and the protection of its cultural heritage were discussed. Having in mind these two important roles of

Romania, the festivals dedicated to Danube take an important place in the cultural calendar of the country.

As mentioned above, for the period of 5 years (from 2011 to 2016) Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia organised together “Blue week” – within the international celebration of Danube Day. AN initiative which had a huge success and its organisation included the most important recommendation, written in the Strategy – **encourage the contact between people and stimulate interinstitutional and interorganisational cooperation between the countries in the Danube region**. Unfortunately, the joint celebration of Danube Day was discontinued and the international event is limited only to local level. In Romania a total of 11 municipalities celebrated in 2019.

The central event takes place in Braila town, and in 2019 it is accompanied by a discussion between representatives of various state administrations and organisations, in the area of river waterbeds – **an important step to get over communicational “deficits” among the interested parties**. It is necessary to note that such meetings shouldn’t just happen on paper, but the results from them needs to implemented constantly. Only this way the execution of the tenders for the Strategy will be sustainable. Together with the central, main event, different activities take place around the festival; there are concerts, river races and others.

Without a doubt, the celebration of Danube Day is the biggest and most important event in Danube Romania. Its popularised actively on the internet pages of the municipal centres and the social networks play the role of fast and effective channel for disseminating information. The engagement of representatives of local and national administration says a lot about the realised importance of the topic.

Folklore (or more specifically, folk dancing, folk singing, traditional clothing), same way as in Bulgaria, are widely popular in Romania. Proof of this is the **International Folklore Festival "Love song along the Danube" in Braila**. It is organised annually and aims to rediscover and promote new voices and performers of folk songs that will contribute to the inner wellbeing of all people living in the Danube Region (and not only). Hence why, every country along the Danube river is invited to take part in the competition, if they are willing to participate. Most likely due to financial reasons or lower reach of the information in other countries, the participants are mainly from the Romanian region. In 2019 the foreign visitors are from Ukraine, Moldova and Serbia and in 2018 – Bulgaria, Ukraine, Moldova and Serbia. Despite this, credit should be given to the organisers for protecting and popularising the cultural heritage of the Danube.

Of interest could be also **the Medieval Festival in Fortress Severin (Festivalul Medieval al Cetă --ii Severinului) in Drobeta - Turnu Severin**. It has been held every year since 2015 until now, at the beginning of September. Similar to the Renaissance festival "The Feast of the Castle of Neuburg", the festival in Turnu Severin gathers tourists from all over the country, who can see and feel what was life in the fortress during the Middle Ages like. A number of scenes, concerts and various games are organised:

*„The medieval festival in the Severin Fortress is connected to the Danube river. The medieval fortress is located on the bank of the river and has a rich history. The festival lasts for 3 days and for each of the days different activities, performances, workshops etc. are organised.”*

*(Representative of local administration, interview)*

Information about the Medieval Festival in the Severin Fortress can be found in almost every major Romanian tourist site. An active Facebook page with multiple followers is also supported.



*Dunav Art Festival, Vukovar*

Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/DunavArtFestival/>

## CROATIA

Croatia seems to be one of the countries where the population feels strongly connected to the Danube. Despite the fact that Croatia does not have strong traditions related to the river (such as Budapest or Vienna) and the former Yugoslav Republic is known mostly for its Adriatic coast, festivals organised in honour of the Danube are extremely popular and involve many interested parties. This can be explained by the country's increasing focus on the West

(after the EU accession) and a return to its roots when the state was part of the Habsburg Empire

The creation of the **Dunav Art Festival** was inspired (as its name implies) by the Danube and the ability of the river to "connect" - people, ideas, cultures and customs. This reason is also cited as the main one in the description provided by the event organisers.

Organised for the first time in 2017, the festival connects the towns of Vukovar, Ilok and Erdut, and the program includes various musical performances, wine tasting, presentation of typical crafts and more.

In its essence, the Danube Art Festival is closer to the "Western" model of organizing festivals. With all the conventionality of this categorization, festivals in Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Czechia and others are more oriented towards presenting different types of arts within a single event, involving participants from several different cities. This is also the style of the Danube Art Festival in Vukovar - undoubtedly a tested and well working model.

In Croatia, much attention is paid to the "Danube Day", as it is part of the larger "Month of the Rivers". As in the other countries, it has been held annually since 2004. After reading in details the activities included in the festival, one starts to feel that the "whole country" is involved in organizing and celebrating the "Danube Day" - state, local and regional institutions, NGOs, schools, folklore formations and more.

When it comes to institutions, we can observe activities to promote sustainable management of water resources at the river basin level. Within the Danube Day school talks are organised, excursions showing to the youngest generation the importance of river basins, environmental protection and other similar topics. Folklore formations, in turn, present the cultural traditions preserved in the regions around the Sava and Danube rivers. All of these activities enjoy wide participation and are visited often, mainly by the local population.

While not directly related to the Danube, the **Vukovar Film Festival** is an event that contributes to attracting tourists and promoting the culture of the region. For the twelfth year in a row, the festival presents films from Croatia, Serbia, Hungary, Czechia, Romania, and Bulgaria, and its accompanying concerts and programs further enhance the cultural value of the festival and the region.



*Bodrog festival of culture and tradition*  
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/bodrog.fest>

### 3.1.4 Candidate countries

#### **SERBIA**

“The **Bodrog Fest**” has been held since 2005 until now, every second weekend of August. The significance of this event is to reflect the preservation of tradition and culture as well as the natural resources of the town. The main idea is to introduce Bodrog as a tourist destination through old handcrafts, home-made products, traditional dishes, drinks, customs, costumes, games and songs, as well as nature.

During the event, Bodrog presents many old handcrafted products as well as other local products typical for Bachki Monostor and its surroundings. The festival is attended by over 10,000 guests from the country and abroad, making it an important event for the Danube Region in Serbia.

The International “**Danube Day**” has also attracted a lot of interest in Serbia, since the very beginning of the festival in 2004. This year the event was held in the following cities along the Danube: Belgrade (June 15), Bački Monostor (12- July 14), Novi Sad (June 15), Golubac, Veliko Gradishte and more.

Similar to the other countries along the river coast, the Danube Day is celebrated with numerous concerts, activities for children, educational programs, etc. - activities that are part of the “Danube Day” in almost all countries surveyed

Here it is also important to mention once again the Blue Week event - a joint celebration of the "Danube Day" by Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia. However, it was discontinued in 2016 - after 5 consecutive events. It is advisable to invest some time in considering the revival of this idea and to identify the reasons that led to its termination.

**EXIT** is a popular festival for electronic and rock music from the whole world. In Novi Sad, right next to the historic fortress Petrovaradin, located on the shore of Danube river, the Exit festival attracts thousands of visitors from the Balkans and Europe. Without a doubt, this is the largest event in Serbia, winning twice the award for “Best big festival” of the European festival awards, in 2013 and 2017.

The festival was founded in 2000 in Novi Sad, Serbia as a student movement, aiming for democracy and freedom in Serbia and the Balkans. After the end of the Milosevic regime, the festival continued to take place and its social responsibility is still a key aspect of its activities.

Based on what has been said so far, it is of utmost importance to liaise with its organisers and carry out joint initiatives.



„Danube Day“, Bosna and Herzegovina  
Source: <https://www.danubeday.org>

### **BOSNA AND HERZEGOVINA**

“Danube Day ” is an event that has increased its scope and has become a tradition in countries without direct access to the Danube River. One of them is Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the festival dates back to 2004. The activities during the event are mainly aimed at the young population, including school trips, environmental talks, etc. Perhaps the most important part of the program is the "Festival of the Arts" - an event of a competitive nature,

held in parallel in all countries, part of " The Danube Day”.

Undoubtedly, "Danube Day" is the most important event in Bosnia and Herzegovina related to the preservation and promotion of the cultural identity of the Danube River. Its popularity can be used as an incentive to expand the activities within the festival. A good example is the inclusion of participants in the Sava Cycling Tour 2016, in the 5th-7th day of the event.

**Mostar Blues & Rock Festival, Bosnia and Herzegovina** is held annually, in the summer, in the Herzegovina city of Mostar, and in 2019 it is organised for the 17th time.

The festival is one of the main events in the Cultural Calendar and has a strong presence on the tourist information pages, media, etc.

Despite its indirect connection with the Danube region, the Mostar Music Festival is an important event taking place on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The **Kozara International Folklore Festival** has been taking place every year since 2005, in Banja Luka. Its purpose is to present the cultural specifics of the Kozara Mountain region, from an ethnographic, musical and other perspectives.

## **MONTENEGRO**

In Montenegro, "**Danube Day**" is celebrated in the Djurdjevica Tara area, near the Tara River. The event has an educational and recreational character and is aimed at children and students. The Danube Day celebration is not orientated at tourists, with the main target group being the local population.

For this reason, the event is not mentioned much in tourist and information websites. Given the fact that geographically speaking Montenegro is further away from the Danube region than the other countries, celebrating the holiday together with neighbouring countries (for example Serbia) could lead to higher popularity of the theme.



Tara canyon

Source: <https://360monte.me/tara-rafting>

Another interesting event that takes place in the area is the **Durmitorski prsten** - a hike that takes place in the summer and which passes through the valley of the Tara River. Although such activities could hardly be described as a "festival", their organisation is particularly important for the conservation and preservation of the cultural

heritage of the Danube Region as a whole. This could be an example of an activity to be included in the celebration of the Danube Day or another festival. This approach has been successfully tested and implemented on Bosnia's Danube Day by combining the event with the Sava River Cycling Tour.

The **Mojkovac Film Festival** can also be considered as an important event for the region. It is held annually, in November. Despite the festival's weak connection with the cultural identity of the Danube region, this type of festival is an important part of the cultural calendars of each region and their presence is more than a must.



Danube rock festival, Moldova

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/RocklaDunare/>

### 3.1.5 Neighbouring countries

#### MOLDOVA

The Moldavian Danube “Rock Festival” takes place in the Galati Region and was organised for the sixth time in the summer of 2019. The information on the internet about this festival is scarce, and we can learn more about it from

the event's Facebook page. Having in mind that it is followed by about 4000 people, it can be concluded that the Danube Rock Festival is a well-attended and anticipated

event by Moldovans. Again through social media we learn about the festival's guests - rock bands from Ukraine, Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary, and others - which also indicates the event's popularity and importance for the Danube region.

Giurgiulesti is the place in Moldova where the Danube and Prut rivers. Namely this village with a population of about 3,000 has been recognized as the most appropriate to mark the “Danube Day”. The celebration attracts thousands of visitors (from the town and the area), and it mostly consists of presenting the specific cultural and musical highlights of the region. The state institutions have also seriously taken up the task of "promoting and preserving the cultural and natural heritage of the Danube" - by presenting projects related to the topic, etc.

However, the availability of information about the Danube Day is limited to local publications, social networks and the official website of the event.

On the other hand, the festival is widely covered in the media, which is an indicator of the strong connection Moldova has to Europe and the countries of the Danube region.

**Bostaniada** is an ethnographic gastronomic festival, organised in close proximity to Lake Balabanesti. It takes place in the fall, and so far a total of 8 festivals have been organised. The purpose of the event is to promote local producers and other local agricultural products. The festival promotes rural tourism, traditional dishes, socio-cultural values and farmers in the Republic of Moldova.

Bostaniada is a traditional festival, organised annually since 2012. It takes place on the last Sunday in September and lasts for four days.

The festival is heavily promoted in tourist guides and sites presenting the important cultural places and events that tourists should visit. Information about the Bostaniada is also available on the municipality's website.

### UKRAINE

“The Danube Sich” Rock Festival takes place in the city of Izmail, Odessa region. It takes place in the summer, usually in late June, for 2-3 days. It is organised jointly with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Odessa Regional State Administration.

The festival is actively promoted and is one of the major events in this region. It is noteworthy that in Moldova and Ukraine it is popular to organise major music, and in most cases rock festivals, in the Danube River area. Undoubtedly, the presence of a water basin creates a pleasant atmosphere and the two countries benefit from it.

“Your country festival” (“Твоя країна фест”) is another music festival, organised in Izmail. It takes place on the summer, with the cooperation of Ministry of informational policy of Ukraine. It was launched in 2018 and it attracts participants from Ukraine, Romania and Moldova.

The festival is an important component of the cultural programme of the region and is often mentioned in the tourist offering.



„Your country“  
Источник: <https://mip.gov.ua/>

„Danube Day“ is also an integral part of Ukraine's cultural programme. It takes place in the Kilia City Park and is aimed at local children and students. Similar to the other countries, in Ukraine the Danube Day is accompanied by a conference at which representatives of the administration discuss important issues for the development of the water basin and its adjacent territories.

Given the location of Ukraine, the Danube's international celebration may be complemented by jointly organised programs with Romania and Moldova.

### 3.2 Number and profile of the tourists. Effect on tourist supply

In 2018, **approximately 219 million overnight stays** were registered in the Danube Region. Calculated on a national basis, these are **just over 1/4** of the overall number of tourists staying in tourist accommodation establishments in the surveyed 14 countries.

The largest number of overnight stays (which is many times higher than in other countries in the region) are in the EU Member countries, Zone 1. This is another important indicator of the drastic differences between the countries in the region.



Danube River

Source: <https://pixabay.com>

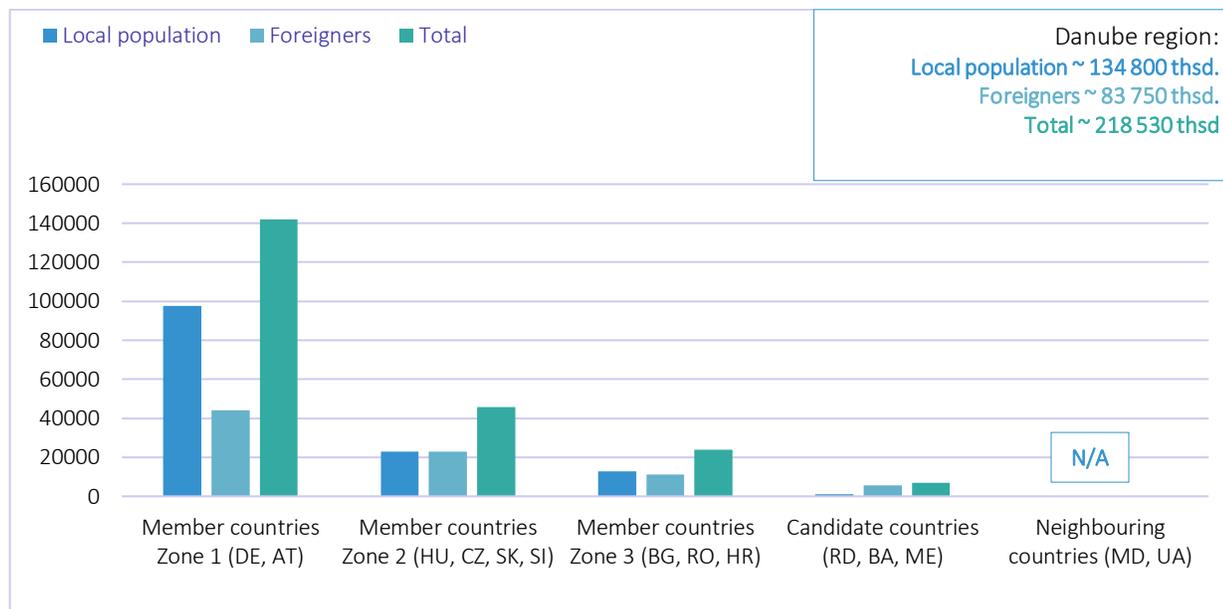
Second place is taken by the countries in Central Europe. It has to be mentioned that Czechia and Slovenia are included as countries whose territory is “peripheral” to Danube river and the number of tourists staying in accommodation is affected by their overall popularity as tourist destinations.

We also need to note that Danube river flows through the capitals of the other two countries in the group – Budapest (Hungary) and Bratislava (Slovakia). Undoubtedly, this helps increase the total number of overnight stays in the region,

related to Danube river, since the two capitals are the most visited places in the respective countries. This is also valid for Vienna – a country with almost 13 million overnight stays in 2018. Still, the importance of the Danube river can't be overlooked, having in mind the strong impact of the river on those cities.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to make a comparative analysis with the EU Neighbouring Countries, as there is a lack of information on the number of people staying in tourist accommodation establishments. The national statistical institutes of Ukraine and Moldova do not keep such information and the analysis of the number and profile of tourists in these two countries uses other indicators.

Graph2. Number of nights spent in the Danube region for 2018: Local tourists, foreigners and total number of nights.  
Source: Eurostat, National Statistical Institutes. Calculations and Visualization: “GFK-2016” Consortium

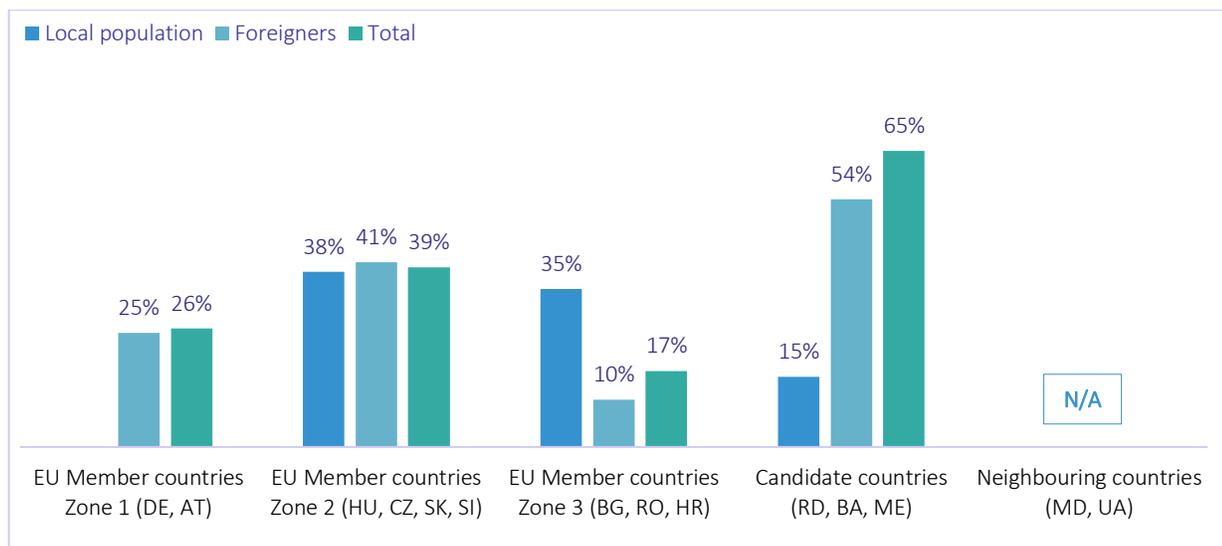


Note: The data for Slovenia, Romania, Serbia and Bosna and Herzegovina is accurate as of 31.12.2017

Despite the relatively small number of overnight stays, **visits to the regions along the Danube River are a major part of the tourist flow to the accession countries and the Member countries (Zone 2)**. It is an indicator of the great value of the river for the population. However, more active measures need to be taken regarding the development of inland tourism in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. Although the results presented above are part of the overall picture of the state of tourism in these countries, the development of projects that would lead to more visits for the regions near Danube is highly advisable.

The low share of visits to the Danube regions in Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia can't be ignored. This might be seen as acceptable for Croatia, given that the focus in this country is primarily on the development of maritime tourism. However, for Bulgaria and Romania, such a picture can't hardly be accepted given their role as coordinators of Priority Area 3: To promote culture and tourism, people to people contacts.

Graph 3. Percentage share of overnight stays in the Danube regions (NUTS 2) in the 14 surveyed countries, in relation to the overall number of stays in tourist accommodation on national level.  
Source: Eurostat, National Statistical Institutes. Calculations and Visualization: “GFK-2016” Consortium

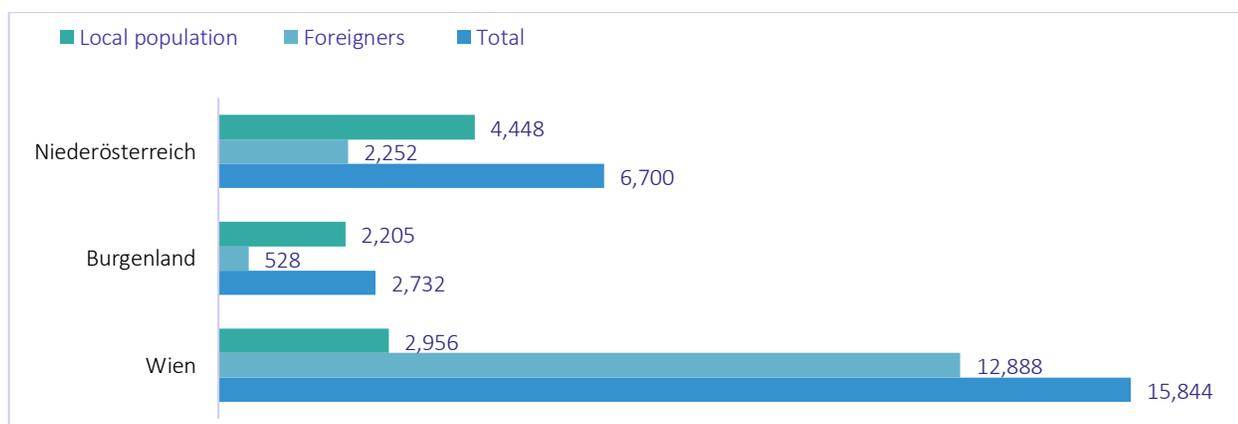


Note: The data for Slovenia, Romania, Serbia and Bosna and Herzegovina is accurate as of 31.12.2017

### 3.2.1 EU Member countries, Zone 1

In Vienna, one of the most visited capitals in Europe, about 16 million overnight stays were registered in 2017, the majority of which were by foreigners.

Graph 4. Number of nights spent (in thousands) in Austria, regions (NUTS 2) along the Danube river, 2018. Брой реализирани нощувки (в хиляди) в Германия, региони (NUTS 2) по поречието на река Дунав, 2018 г.: Local tourists, foreigners and total number of nights.  
Source: Eurostat, National Statistical Institutes. Calculations and Visualization: “GFK-2016” Consortium



Such "profile" of the tourists in Vienna also implies the variety of visitors to the festivals held in the Austrian capital. This is especially true for the **Danube Summer Music Festival**, which, according to information from the organisers, is visited by tourists from all over Europe. Given the importance of the event, it can be assumed that a significant number of guests visit Vienna precisely because of the festival. The widespread dissemination of information on tourist websites for the city, as well as in the cultural calendars, defines the Danube Summer Music Festival on the Danube island as being quite integrated into the tourist offering and as playing the role of an important "magnet" for tourists.

However, the dysfunctionalities that such a festival can lead to must also be considered. The noise in the surrounding area would disturb the guests and residents of the city, and pollution after numerous festivals has always been a problem for every municipality. However, the Summer festival on the Danube island increases the city's cultural value and creates an atmosphere that makes Vienna even more attractive.

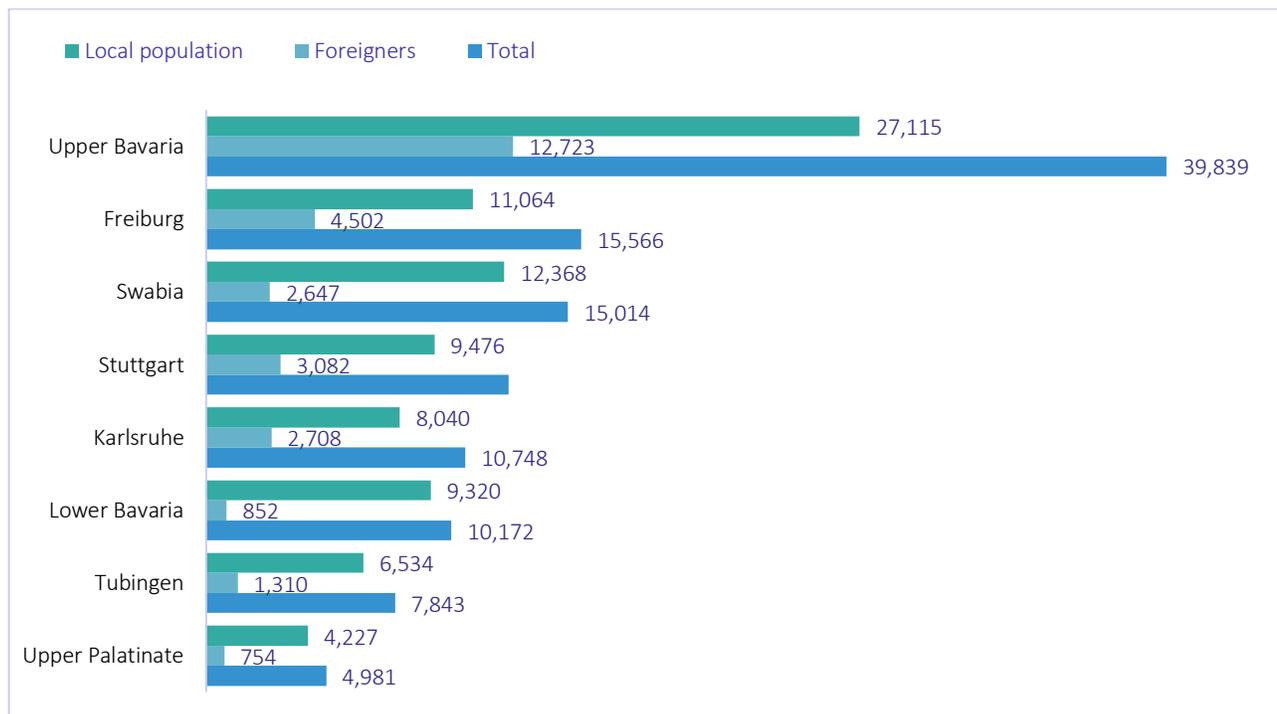
The events that are being organised to celebrate the "**Danube Day**" may be classified as "internal" for Austria. They are aimed mainly at the younger generation (mainly students) and are with educational and entertaining character. Thus, even if the "Danube Day" does not have a direct impact on the size of the tourist flow in Vienna, it contributes significantly to the sustainable teaching of the Danube theme and its value for the environment and the cultural heritage of the region.

„**Classic on Danube**” has a completely different 'mission' if it is to be compared to the “Danube Day” and the “Summer Music Festival”. And for that reason, the tourists that it attracts are more specific. As the name implies, the guests of the “Classic on Danube” are fans of classical music, mostly representatives of the local population. The “Classic on Danube” is one of the many and varied festivals that take place in Vienna and complement the vibrancy of the Viennese cultural calendar

Just over half of the nights in the Danube region are spent **in Germany**. This makes the federal states of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg one of the main "promoters" of the Danube cultural identity.

However, as shown in the graph below, these nights are mostly realized by Germans - domestic tourism is highly developed, which implies a greater desire to participate in festivals and getting to know the culture of different regions in their own country.

Graph 5. Number of nights spent (in thousands) in Germany, regions (NUTS 2) along the Danube river, 2018. Брой реализирани нощувки (в хиляди) в Германия, региони (NUTS 2) по поречието на река Дунав, 2018 г.: Local tourists, foreigners and total number of nights. Source: Eurostat, National Statistical Institutes. Calculations and Visualization: "GFK-2016" Consortium



The **International Danube Festival** is based in Baden-Württemberg, in the administrative district of Tübingen. According to Eurostat data, about 8 million nights were spent there in 2018, with a 1:7 ratio of locals - foreigners.

Such information leads us to think that those "over 350,000 visitors who were going to the two banks of the Danube during these 10 almost sunny days<sup>5</sup>" are mostly residents of the city and visitors from the surrounding areas.

Despite being more closed, the International Danube Festival with the high number of visitors is one of the important "holidays" for the region. Undoubtedly, for a small city like Ulm (with a population of about 120,000), it holds a major position in its cultural calendar.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.donaufest.de/media/presse/presseinfos/>

**Ingolstadt** is a city in the region of Upper Bavaria - the most visited Danube region in Germany. According to the Municipality data, in 2017, 513,741 nights spent in Ingolstadt and just over 150 thousand of them were foreigners<sup>6</sup>.

When asked how many people visit the city, local government officials say is over 3.5 million:

*Do you possess knowledge about the number of tourists that visited your city (region) last year?*

*40 000 tourists pass by the velo-track of Danube river and Ingolstadt. A total of 3.5 million tourists visit Ingolstadt annually.*

*(Representative of local administration, interview )*

The high attendance rates also determine the high popularity of the **Ingolstadt City Festival**. Unfortunately, the number of its visitors could hardly be determined due to the specific nature of the festival. It takes place on the streets of the Old Town and attracts local citizens and tourists with alternative performances by artists. According to local government officials, the festival does not have a specific niche; it is attended by people of all ages and social status.

*What kind of people visit such a festival? Feel free to generalize – what is their age, social status (students, workers, married couples, etc.) and country of origin? Are they mostly local or do you have visitors from other countries as well?*

*„Party“ tourists, middle-aged people, families with kids.*

*(Representative of local administration, interview )*

The Ingolstadt City Festival is highly integrated in the tourist offering – there is information about it in the tourist guides and the cultural calendar.

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.ingolstadt.de/media/custom/465\\_1995\\_1.PDF?1534841095](https://www.ingolstadt.de/media/custom/465_1995_1.PDF?1534841095)



Neuburg is a settlement that, just like Ingolstadt, is located in the Upper Bavaria region. **The Neuburg Castle Festival** is an annual event that attracts mostly German visitors. According to the information on the festival's website, in 2019 it was visited by about 55,000 visitors<sup>7</sup>. By comparison, according to official figures, the city's population is 120,000.

This number clearly shows how important the festival is for the tourism and the preservation of the culture and history of the city. The Festival of the Castle of Neuburg is highly integrated in the tourist offering and the castle is the most popular attraction of the city.

Neuburg castle festival  
Source: <https://www.schlossfest.de/>

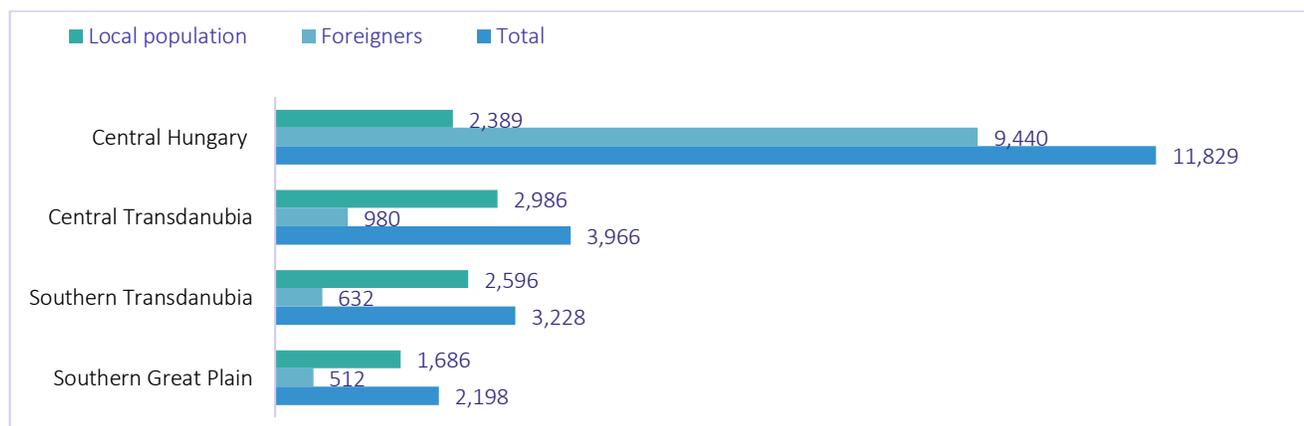
### 3.2.2 EU Member countries, Zone 2

More than half of the overnights stays in 2018 in the Hungarian region were in the Central region (Közép-Magyarország) or the area where the capital Budapest is located.

The share of the foreigners is four times higher than the one of the locals, which turns Budapest into an important centre for the promotion of Danube and its heritage among the foreign tourists.

Graph 6. Number of nights spent (in thousands) in Hungary, regions (NUTS 2) along the Danube river, 2018. Local tourists, foreigners and total number of nights.

Source: Eurostat, National Statistical Institutes. Calculations and Visualization: "GFK-2016" Consortium



Undoubtedly, the Danube river is an integral part of Budapest's character, and the activities that take place in the city are always somehow connected to the river. For this reason, it is difficult to assess the extent to which a festival held within the city has contributed to the increase of tourists in the region.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.schlossfest.de/>

We can certainly say, however, that the Danube river and its integral part in the city certainly play a huge role when choosing a destination to visit.

The events in Budapest that are part of “**Danube Day**” are mostly targeted at the local population. The meetings and conferences that are held are part of the execution and update of the overall politics to preserve and promote Danube river.

The numerous events taking place at the same time throughout Budapest, Győr, Ersecchanad and others involve a variety of activities for children in the region. According to information on the website of the “Danube Day”, in 2018 the participants were “thousands<sup>8</sup>” and joint Serbian-Hungarian meetings were held in the border areas with Serbia.

*Even though at a first glance it seems that the events within the International Danube Day do not directly contribute to the increase of tourist flow in the area, they undoubtedly have an important place in the cultural calendar of the Danube region. This way the domestic tourism is stimulated, performances (such as regattas and others involving the river) are impressive for the foreign tourists, and the organization of joint celebrations in the border regions also allows events to be attended by people from other countries.*

*A weak point is the rare “joint celebration” of “Danube Day” by neighbouring countries from the Danube region.*

**Esztergom** is part of the Central Transdanubia region and is the second most visited Danube region in Hungary, with nearly **4 million overnight** stays in tourist accommodations in 2018. Unlike the Central Hungary region, which also includes Budapest, foreigners represent a small share of tourists in the region.

However, Esztergom with its small size (according to official figures as of January 2019, the population is just over 28,000<sup>9</sup> people), is a popular tourist destination - in 2018, about 800,000<sup>10</sup> people visited the city for tourism.



When it comes to the summer festival „**Comedum Corso**” though, the tourists are significantly less:

[lang=EN&p\\_id=25131](#)

*Do you have information how many people visited your town for the festival??*

*Despite the large number of tourists, only 2-3% of them visit the festival.*

*(Representative of local administration, interview)*

Comedium Corso

Source: <https://uj szo.com/regio/kezdodik-a-comedium-corso>

Regarding the profile of the festival's visitors, this is based on the personal assessment of the interviewed Local administration representative. According to the respondent, they are **mostly Hungarians, between the ages of 18 and 45**. However, it is possible that the information on the number of visitors to the festival to be lowered. Having in mind that Comedium Corso is not held in a closed room and the performances of the artists are all over the Old Town which is filled with tourists, we would conclude that the share of visitors to the festival is many times higher. It is also possible, however, that these 2-3% are the visitors who come specifically for the festival. We can still conclude that Comedium Corso plays an important role in the festive life of the town and contributes to the popularisation of Esztergom as a tourist destination.

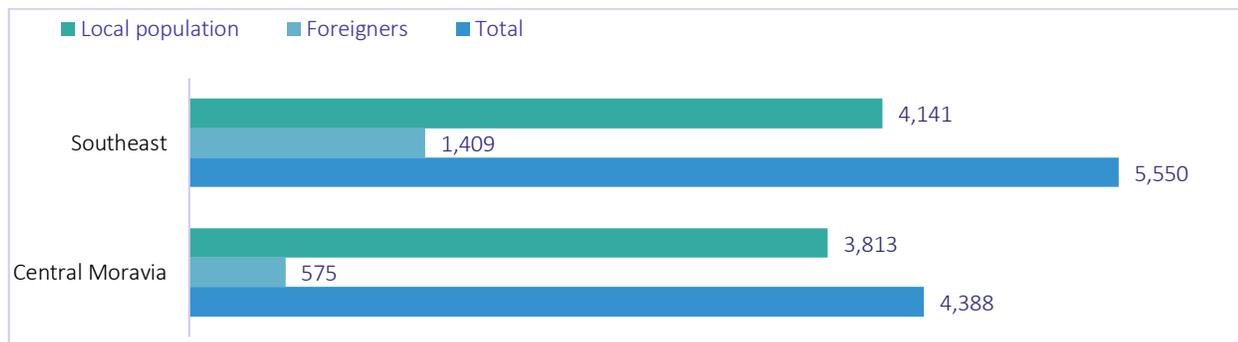
Nagymarosi is a small town in central Hungary. The festival which is organised in its vicinity (the Festival of the chili pepper) does not have such an impact on attracting tourists to the region, but it definitely “spices up” the Hungarian festival calendar, and not only the Hungarian one. With its few hundred visitors, the festival has been successfully integrated in the variety of tourist offers in the Danube region.

According to information from Euromonitor, Prague is the 20<sup>th</sup> most visited town in the world, attracting almost 9 million tourists in 2017. The Czech capital, however, won't be included in the current analysis. In the graph below are shown the overnight stays in the Czech regions, through which the left inflow of the Danube river flows – Morava.

With a total number of about 10 million overnight stays for 2018, the Southeast (Jihovýchod) and Central Moravia (Střední Morava) account for almost 18% of the overall number of stays on national level.

*Graph 7. Number of nights spent (in thousands) in Czechia, regions (NUTS 2) along the Danube river, 2018. Local tourists, foreigners and total number of nights.*

*Source: Eurostat, National Statistical Institutes. Calculations and Visualization: “GFK-2016” Consortium*



The less popular tourist regions, as well as the fact that Czechia does not have access to the Danube river, also determine the less pronounced connection of the festivals related to the Danube region. In the interest of the Czech Republic's involvement in this topic, it is advisable to initiate more communication activities and common projects through which the Czech Republic can start being perceived as part of the Danube family.

A good example for such activity is the international “Danube Day”. In Czechia it takes place in the town of Most in Jablunkov, Moravia. The activities related to the celebration are mainly aimed at the schoolkids in the region and the tourists visiting the event are rarity. It is possible for this “gap” to be overcome by including a few international activities, which would attract visitors from neighbouring countries.

Similar conclusion can be made for the festivals organised in Uherske Hradiste and Hodonin in Moravia. The festivals in those towns definitely contribute towards keeping the cultural identity of the region, but it is recommended to take some actions and include more actively Czechia in the “Danube region” topic.

*This can be achieved by building co-operation in this area with the two countries with access to Danube (Hungary and Slovakia), with which the Czech Republic is part of the so-called “The Visegrád Four”. Based on the already established cooperation, it would be much easier to involve the Czechia in projects related to the development and preservation of the cultural identity of the Danube.*

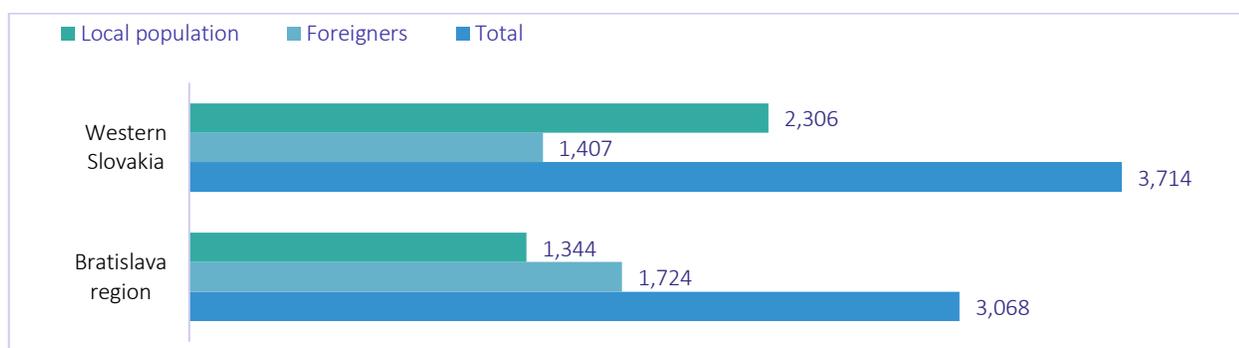
**Slovakia** is one of the countries whose capital is also located on the Danube river. The Bratislava region and Western Slovakia are the regions through which the Danube passes and when we look at them together they account for about 45% of the overnight stays in 2018 at national level.

In the two Danube regions, the ratio between foreigners and local tourists is almost even. In the capital Bratislava, following the general trend, foreign tourists represent a larger share of the total number of nights spent.

Of course, the region behind this is also that the size of Slovakia allows making one-day trips. It is very likely that the Slovaks travel more intensively within their country, but do not use tourist accommodations when they arrive at the destination.

Graph 8. Number of nights spent (in thousands) in Slovakia, regions (NUTS 2) along the Danube river, 2018. Local tourists, foreigners and total number of nights.

Source: Eurostat, National Statistical Institutes. Calculations and Visualization: “GFK-2016” Consortium



As it was mentioned above, the Slovakian “Danube day” is held in two cities – the capital Bratislava and Gabčíkovo Dam. The festivities in both places are mainly orientated towards the local population. In Bratislava, it has educational character and is aimed at the youngest generation. According to the official webpage of “Danube Day” the number of pupils who took part in the educational programme is 200. In Gabčíkovo Dam the festivities have wider scope, attracting around 2000 people in 2019, mainly local tourists.

In Slovakia, same as in Hungary, it is advisable for the “Danube Day” not to be limited to organizing educational events for children. Organised additional events such as concerts and events undoubtedly help to attract tourists and integrate the product into the tourist offer, but it seems necessary to extend their scope. Using its territorial, linguistic and cultural proximity, Slovakia could organise joint celebrations of Danube Day with its Czech neighbours

One of the most important and visited events in Bratislava is the festival „**Bratislavský majáles**“, which takes place each year in May. The event is frequently mentioned in the tourist offers and is being presented as a long-anticipated and unforgettable experience. Based on unofficial data, “Bratislavský majáles “ attracted about 50,000 people in 2019. The visitor profile has not



Bratislavský majáles

Source:

<https://www.bratislavskymajales.sk/festival>

been researched, and given the high number of tourists visiting the city, it is hard to guess what the ratio of local to foreign visitors is. Certainly, however, the festival contributes significantly to the city's image of an attractive and cozy place for walking and entertaining. The location of the "Bratislavský majáles" - on the banks of the Danube, near the Historical center of Bratislava, further helps to create a pleasant atmosphere. One of the weaknesses of the festival is the fact that it is being held outdoor, which could easily turn problematic due to the volatile May weather in the Slovak capital.

**Komarno** is a city located in Western Slovakia, a region whose overnight stays in tourist accommodations are mainly made up of Slovaks. The exact number of visitors to the Lake UP Festival is missing, but according to its Facebook page, in 2019 they are about 9,000.

The event is mainly local and the product is poorly integrated in the tourism offer in the region.

**Slovenia** is one of the countries located in the periphery of the Danube region (it covers only 2% of the Danube drainage basin).

This on its own also determines the low levels of engagement with the theme of preserving and protecting Danube's cultural identity.

The data provided on the number of overnight stays in Slovenia, in the region where the Danube catchments are located, is highly compromised due to the fact that the Western Slovenia region is the most visited tourist region in this country. It includes the capital Ljubljana and Lake Bled.

*Graph 9. Number of nights spent (in thousands) in Slovakia, regions (NUTS 2) along the Danube river, 2018. Local tourists, foreigners and total number of nights.*

*Source: Eurostat, National Statistical Institutes. Calculations and Visualization: "GFK-2016" Consortium*



As presented in the report, “**Danube Day**” is organised in Slovenia as well, but mainly through seminars and meetings, the organization of educational programs for children and students and others. This way the celebration of the “Danube Day” in Slovenia is aimed entirely at the local community, without attracting tourists.

The recommendation here can be almost entirely the same as the one given to Czechia - the organization of joint projects with neighbouring countries whose presence on the Danube is tangible. In the case of Slovenia, this is Croatia, a country with which Slovenes have close cultural, linguistic and historical ties.

The Ljubljana Festival, in its essence, is very similar to the **Bratislavský majáles** in Slovakia - it plays the role of a major and anticipated event for the city and is strongly featured in the tourist offer. According to information from the organisers, about 50,000 people visit the festival each year in the Slovenian capital. Visitor profile information is not available, neither is the proportion of foreign visitors to local citizens known.

There is no information available on the number of tourists visiting the “Trailer of the local breweries”, but having in mind that the festival takes place on the streets, it would be hard to determine their number.

### 3.2.3 EU Member countries, Zone 3

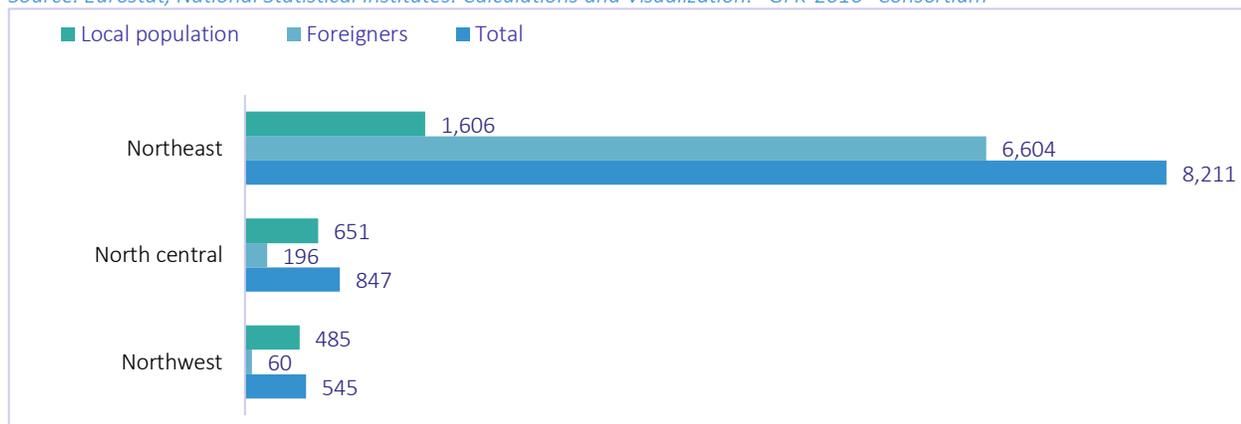
**The Bulgarian Danube regions are the least visited in the whole Danube region<sup>11</sup>.** The number of nights spent is many times lower than in the other countries. The only exception is the northeastern planning region, but the high share of tourists staying in tourist accommodation is mainly due to traveling to the northern Black Sea during the summer

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<sup>11</sup> Compared with overnight stays in the Danube regions of the EU Member countries zones 1,2, and 3 and the group “Candidate countries”

Graph 10. Number of nights spent (in thousands) in Bulgaria, regions (NUTS 2) along the Danube river, 2018. Local tourists, foreigners and total number of nights.

Source: Eurostat, National Statistical Institutes. Calculations and Visualization: "GFK-2016" Consortium



From the perspective of the low visitors rate of the regions as a whole, it is safe to assume that there is a low presence of Bulgarian and foreign tourists within the organised festivals.

In order to overcome the unfavorable trend, certain measures can be implemented, aimed at stimulating the inland tourism and promoting festivals as part of the Bulgarian and Danube heritage.

The local and state administration measures that can be taken to attract more foreign festival tourists (and not only) could include:

- Stimulating the joint festival projects with Romania and Serbia (e.g. revive "Blue week");
- Participation in all-European Danube projects;
- Financial aid for the municipal festivals, which would allow them to invite participants from other countries;
- Financial and administrative aid for the creation of a festival, big and important enough for this part of the Danube region, which would turn into one of the main events on the cultural calendar (using Exit in Novi Sad and the Danube festivals in Germany and Austria as examples).

Attempts to implement the last point have been made by the Tutrakan municipality for several years now, by organizing the "Fiery Danube" and "July Morning" festivals. According to NSI data, in 2013 the number of nights spent in the municipality was only 1956, and as stated in the Integrated plan for urban reconstruction and development "a complete economic boom is needed" to increase the tourist

interest. A few years later, in 2019, with or without this "economic boom"<sup>12</sup>, the municipality enjoyed high number of visitors:

*Do you have an idea, even if it's not an accurate information, what is the number of the tourists in your region and how it has changed during the years?*

*„The first year, based on information by the Tourism agency and the Historic museum between 600 and 800 tourists have visited Tutrakan.*

*And now just for “Fiery Danube” they are between 10 and 15,000.*

*(Organiser, interview)*



Tutrakan

Source: <https://www.kmeta.bg>

The profile of visitors to the “Fiery Danube” is diverse and the proportion of foreigners is about 1/4 . The organisers of the event share the opinion that the main reason for the high attendance rates is that people from the region get the chance to see and hear famous performers who otherwise hold concerts far from their town. The fact that the festival has free entry further helps to increase the attractiveness of the event. The proximity of Romania and the presence of Danube Bridge-1 also prove to be an important factor for the variety of national visitors.

*What is the profile of the tourists, who visit Tutrakan for the festival?*

*P: There is no specific target group due to the simple reason that some tourists come here to listen to classical music, to watch ballet, opera. Other tourists come specifically for the ethnic evening, third come for the pop and rap, fourth for the rock music. So there is no target groups as such. Each age group and all professions come here.*

*You can meet the whole of Bulgaria, there are people coming from all locations for these events.*

*And from abroad?*

*P: A lot of Romanians, Italians come, Germans, French, Ukrainian. Maybe 1/4 of the tourists at the “Fiery Danube” are foreigners because not everyone can afford to go to a big city and watch ballet or to listen and see an opera by*

<sup>12</sup> Integrated plan for urban reconstruction and development of Tutrakan town.

*the Sofia opera and ballet, or to listen to John Lin Turner.....,because all this is rather expensive, while here it's free.*

*Organiser, interview*

The „Fiery Danube” is highly integrated in the tourist offer, and it has become the final goal of a trip to Tutrakan. This festival is also a good example of a successfully organised and promoted tourist product, and events of this type must take place continuously in the Bulgarian Danube regions. There is no equivalent to the “Fiery Danube” at the moment, and unfortunately it can be seen as an “exception” for the Danube festival calendar in Bulgaria.

A lot smaller is the **International Folklore Festival**, which is organised in Vidin. The reasons for this are rooted mainly in lack of finance and clear strategy. The festival is organised thanks to the Municipality, which all year round faces financial difficulties and the availability of human resources is not certain. This also limits the presence of foreign participants to Romania and Serbia.

This festival is definitely not the main event of the town. The visitors are mostly just passing through and they are the relatives of the participants in most of the cases.

*How many people, approximately, are visiting the event?*

*We can't count them for sure, because the festival is organised on the open stage in the park near the Danube river, but we can say that about 1000 people are constantly standing and watching the performances. The ones that are passing through the park might be approximately the same number.*

*And they are mainly local and from...*

*P: Yes, they are local, but there are also a lot of Romanians and Serbians, because we distribute information about the festival via posters in their towns and they know about it.*

*(Organiser, interview)*

The international folklore festival in Vidin is not well integrated in the tourist offering and it mainly focuses on visits by participants, who know about the event from previous years. As a weak side we can definitely point the low popularity and limiting the event to a certain group of people. Measures of all kinds are needed in order to revive it and turn it into a main accent in the cultural program of the town.

Preserving the cultural folklore traditions related to the region, as well as keeping relationships with municipalities from neighbouring countries is the main advantage that shouldn't be lost.

It is a similar situation on **Rousse**, where despite the presence of more festivals the tourist who visit the town because of the festival are a low number. Because of Danube bridge-1 though, the Romanian visitors are significantly higher. Nevertheless, it is highly recommended to organise a festival with higher budget, with a vision and human participation, that would be an important part of the town's cultural programme.

*Do you know how many people visit them? Is there any age difference?*

*Yes, there is age difference. Depending on the number of people who have expressed interest or the number of people who can afford it. Because we can't have such budget where we can meet every single person. They need to sort out their own travels.*

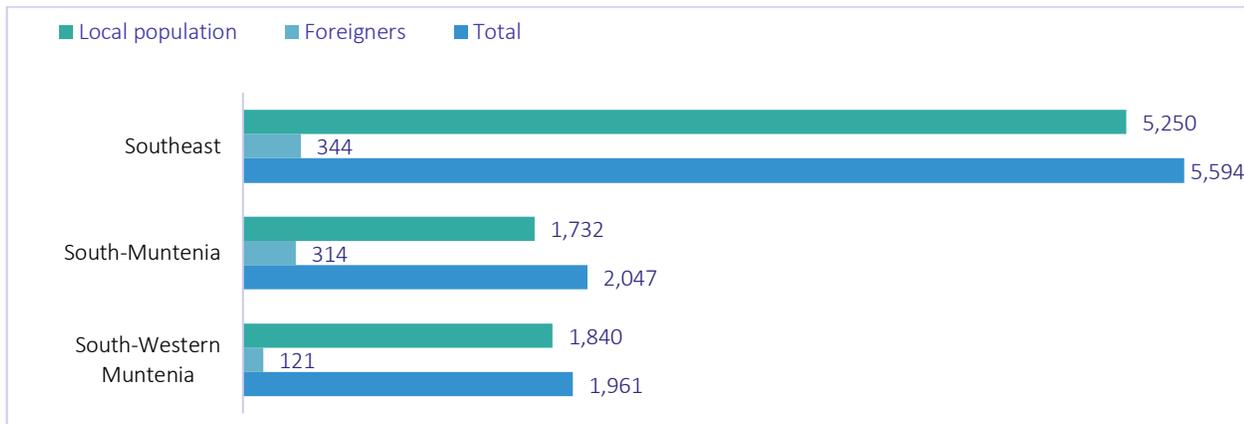
*You're talking about the participants, I meant the visitors, the people who visit the festivals?*

*For all these festivals, mostly the Romanians, come with their parents. There are quite a few parents who are from neighbouring Romania. I can say about the ballet festival, about 150-200 Romanian participants, who come with aunts, grandmothers, grandparents, moms, dads, etc. The dance folklore festival is the same, but if only one band comes there are fewer parents, respectively. Otherwise, this is all happening, the two I'm talking about – cheerleader and folklore, these are external ones because they are festivals. They don't have a competitive character and take place outside, on the square. And this attracts a lot of people. I can't say a specific number, but let's say 2000 people and more see it, because this is done on the central street and I can't say how many people have seen it. But in terms of participants, there are about 300-400 in each, in the dancing one it's slightly higher, there have been up to 800.*

The number of overnight stays in Romanian areas near the Danube river is also relatively small in the context of the Danube region. However, in contrast to Bulgaria, domestic tourism is much more developed in this part of the country - 40% of the nights spent by Romanians on a national basis take place near the Danube river and the Black Sea. This is a prerequisite for better attendance at festivals in these areas.

*Graph 11. Number of nights spent (in thousands) in Romania, regions (NUTS 2) along the Danube river, 2018. Local tourists, foreigners and total number of nights.*

*Source: Eurostat, National Statistical Institutes. Calculations and Visualization: "GFK-2016" Consortium*



Similar to other countries, the events organised as part of the “Danube Day” are mainly targeted at the local population. There are educational and entertaining activities for children and students. The day is also an opportunity for meetings between organizations - private and public in the field of water and environment. In this connection, it is hard to say that the variety the events organised during the “Danube Day” attract a specific type of tourists.

In Galati, the scope of “Danube Day” has been expanded to some extent and it includes a number of dance and singing spectacles, regatta in the river and others. In 2019 the event in this town was visited by about 1000 people, mostly locals – based on information found on “Danube Day’s” official page. Having in mind the specific status, “Danube Day” is not integrated much in the tourist offer. We find it suitable to recommend again taking measures to renew the join project “Blue week”.

There is no available information on the tourists attending the International Folklore Festival "**Love song along the Danube**" in Braila. Same as the organised folk festivals in Bulgaria, it is possible that the "Love song along the Danube" is more "closed" and attracts mostly random bystanders and the actual participants in the event. This conclusion comes to mind due to the fact that the festival is poorly represented in the tourist offer of the area and the available posters are aimed at attracting participants in the competition.

Nevertheless, the festival holds an important place in the preservation of the Danube cultural heritage. The inclusion of various activities and the adaptation to the needs of the tourists would help open the festival to the wider audience. This way it would fulfil its main aim – dissemination and popularisation of the specific cultural and folklore specifics.

The “Medieval Festival in the Severin Fortress” is organised differently. It is highly integrated in the tourism offer, because the Turno-Severin Fortress, located on the bank of Danube river, is a major tourist attraction, and the festival is an additional way to promote it in an attractive way.

There is no information is available on the exact number of tourists who visit the “Medieval Festival”, but according to a Local administration representative, 90% of the guests come to Turno-Severin because of events related in some way to the Danube river:



Medieval festival in the Severin fortress  
 Source: <https://www.facebook.com/events/cetatea-medievală-a-severinului/>

*What is the number of the visitors in your town last year?*

*The average number of tourists who visited our town is about 110,00. The number of people who visited Turno-Severin because of the Danube theme is about 98,000.*

*(Local administration representative, interview)*

There is no accurate information on the profile of the visitors. Broadly speaking, the tourists in the town are “from all age and social groups, with 40% of them guests from foreign countries<sup>13</sup>”.

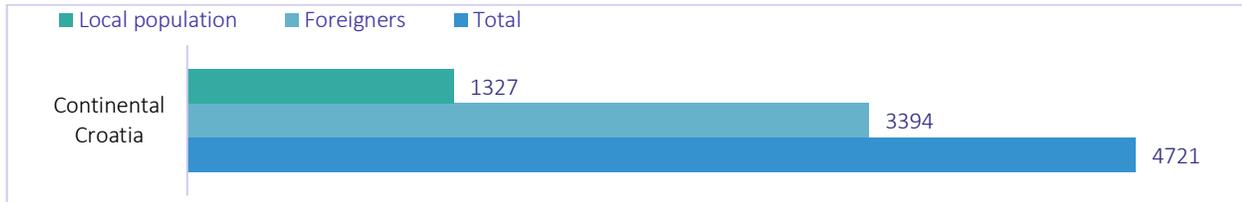
Based on information from the Regional annual book of Eurostat for 2018, the Adriatic coast of Croatia ranks third in terms of number of overnight stays in Europe.

At the same time, there is a huge disbalance – “Continental Croatia” takes only 5% of the overall share of overnight stays. The region in which the capital Zagreb is located and through which Danube river flows is visited less often and mainly by Croatian population.

*Graph 12. Number of nights spent (in thousands) in Croatia, regions (NUTS 2) along the Danube river, 2018. Local tourists, foreigners and total number of nights.*

*Source: Eurostat, National Statistical Institutes. Calculations and Visualization: “GFK-2016” Consortium*

<sup>13</sup> Local administration representative.



The **Danube Art Festival**, as mentioned in point 3.1, is an example of an event that significantly contributes to the preservation and dissemination of the Danube cultural identity. It connects three Croatian cities along the Danube river and mainly attracts tourists from the region. According to the official website of the event, in 2017 the “Danube Art Festival” was attended by about 10,000 people<sup>14</sup>, which is about 9% of the total number of visitors to Vukovar<sup>15</sup>. That’s a significant share which shows the high value that organizing such a festival has.

*You can strongly sense the lack of a festival of this type in the festival culture and calendar of Romania and Bulgaria. Having in mind the established by this point infrastructural, cultural and interinstitutional connections between the two countries, an event with a theme and scope similar to the Danube art festival might be easily organised..*

The **“Danube Day”**, held in Osijek, is not an event of great tourist value. However, organizing it is important for creating a sustainable culture for protecting and appreciating the environment and waters - by organising recreational and educational activities for children and students. According to the organisers of the event, it is attended by an average of **500 people a day**, mainly from "locals, families with children, cyclists, nature lovers and more<sup>16</sup>".

It would be very beneficial to disseminate and maintain the Danube cultural identity by jointly marking the Danube Day with the neighbouring Balkan countries. It would also help with Slovenia’s successful integrated into the Danube common cause.



0 people , or by 0.5 % in all tourists in the country. Source: Croatian statistical

The Film Festival in Vukovar which can be called the “**Danube Film Festival**” as it presents films from almost all countries in the Danube region.

In his interview, the festival’s Artistic Director Dean Sinovic said that "surprisingly," the festival's visitors are mostly locals, with the rest being guests from Zagreb and Serbia. <sup>17</sup>.

Film festival in Vukovar  
Источник: <https://www.festivalfinder.eu>

This fact in itself also implies less touchpoints between the film festival and the tourist offer in the area. However, it is an important part of the cultural calendar of the city and is a good

example how to to develop festival tourism in this direction

### 3.2.4 Candidate countries

Within the territory of Serbia, the Danube flows through the Belgrade and Vojvodina areas. 40% of all overnight stays in tourist accommodations in the country were in those are areas in 2018.

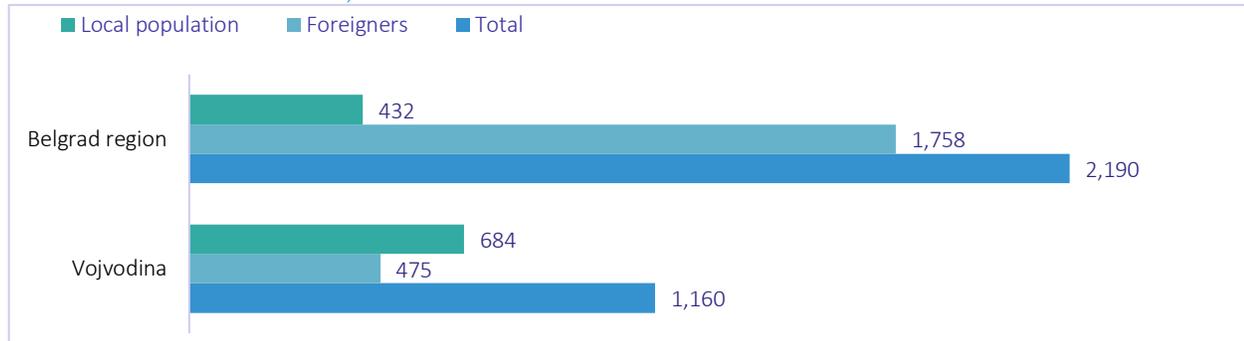
The centers of both regions are with great historical, cultural, economic and political significance to the state - respectively the capital Belgrade (Belgrade area) and Novi Sad (Vojvodina). The Danube, flowing through Belgrade and Novi Sad, is also an important aspect of the tourism development of the two cities.

*Graph 12. Number of nights spent (in thousands) in Serbia, regions (NUTS 2) along the Danube river, 2018. Local tourists, foreigners and total number of nights.*

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.festivalfinder.eu/news/vukovar-film-festival-efte-laureate>

Source: National statistical institute, Serbia. Calculations and visualisation: "GFK-2016" Consortium



“Danube Day” attracts a lot of attention in Serbia – in 2019 it was celebrated in 30 towns. According to the organisers of the event, “Danube Day” was visited by about 4000 people in Belgrade, and the profile of the visitors is diverse:

*„At the event you can see guests from 2 to 70-years old. From students, pensioners, families, elderly. Literally – all age groups and professions.“*

*Organiser*

Undoubtedly, the celebration of “Danube Day” is highly featured in the tourist offers, but mostly on local level. It is mainly seen as a town’s festivity, which should be attended by the local population.

*Particularly important for the Danube region would be the organization of joint "Danube Days". Serbia is indeed located in the "center" of the Balkan Danube Region, surrounded by all the countries covered by the EU Strategy. This can be used as an advantage, not only for Serbia but for the whole region - by organizing joint initiatives and promoting inter-institutional and inter-organizational cooperation in the region.*

In Serbia, together with Bulgaria and Romania, folklore festivals hold an important place in the country's cultural calendar. Unlike the current folklore events in the Danube regions of Bulgaria and Romania, which do not register high attendance, the **festival in Bachki Monostor** attracts a large audience from the entire region. Of course, this can be due to the high level of tourists in the region as a whole, in contrast with the Danube regions in Bulgaria and Romania.

However, it is important to note that, according to information on the festival’s website, the Bodrog Festival of Culture and Tradition was visited by over 10,000 people from the country and abroad. Given that the city's population was less than 4,000 in 2011, the festival is a leading tourist event in the area

Another festival of great importance for the administrative province of Vojvodina is the **EXIT festival** in Novi Sad.

The data on number of visitors is mixed (given the multitude of festival-related articles online), but the number varies between 130,000 and 150,000 people, which for a city of 235,000 makes EXIT a festival not only

important for the city and the region, but also for the whole country.



EXITSource:  
<https://www.facebook.com/pg/exit.festival>

The event is attended by guests from all over the world, including Bulgaria. The scale of the festival and the fact that it is being held on an international level, as well as its geographical location, lead to the majority of visitors being from the neighbouring Balkan and Central European countries.

**Montenegro** is one of the countries in the Danube region that is least likely to be associated with the Danube - accounting for only 0.9% of the river's drainage basin.

For this reason, it is also much more difficult to assess the degree to which the organised festivals in Montenegro are related to the Danube theme. We should also take into account the fact that this country is popular with its Adriatic coastal resorts, which attract the bulk of tourists.

Graph 13. Number of nights spent (in thousands) in Serbia, regions (NUTS 2) along the Danube river, 2018. Local tourists, foreigners and total number of nights.

Source: National statistical institute, Montenegro Calculations and visualisation: "GFK-2016" Consortium



This predefines the content of the cultural calendar of Montenegro – the festivals’ accent, especially in the summer, is on their connection with the Adriatic coast.

An exception to this is the celebration of the **“Danube Day”**. It is hard to say that this event is covered in the Montenegro's tourism offer - on the contrary. It is aimed only at the younger generation - children and students from the Tara river region. The official website of the Danube Day has no information on the number of participants, but given the scope of the event, it can be assumed that it is not high. As suggested in point 3.1., the initiation of joint events with neighbouring countries could help to overcome to some extent the disbalance between maritime and continental Montenegro.

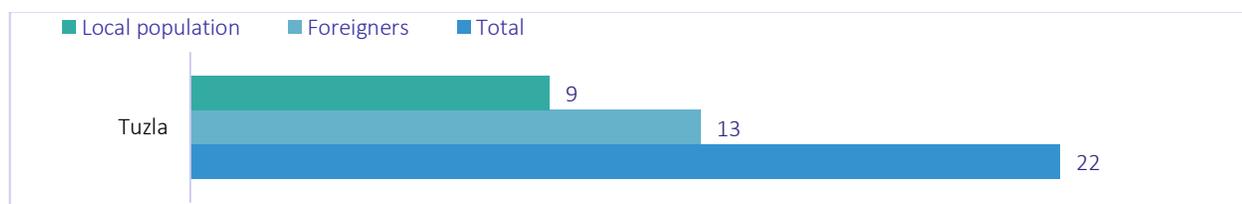
There is no information on the number of participants in the **Durmitor Ring** either. Despite this, its popularity is big enough to consider it as one of the most important events in the region. It is very integrated in the area's tourism offer and it could potentially be a successful and interesting addition to the **“Danube Day”** celebration.

The **Mojevac Film Festival**, with its nearly 50-year long history, attracts a large number of visitors each year - mainly from the region. The festival is very popular in the tourism offering and is an important element in the cultural calendar of the area.

**Bosna and Herzegovina** is the least visited country from the three candidate countries.

*Graph 14. Number of nights spent (in thousands) in Serbia, regions (NUTS 2) along the Danube river, 2018. Local tourists, foreigners and total number of nights.*

*Source: National statistical institute, Bosna and Herzegovina. Calculations and visualisation: “GFK-2016” Consortium*



According to information from the event's organisers, in 2019, **“Danube Day”** was attended by **30 people, all of whom are members of the mining community**. The target group of the festival also determines its weaker integration in the tourist offer. It is recommended to work towards holding joint events with Bosnia and Herzegovina neighbouring countries.

There is no specific information on the number of visitors to **Mostar Blues & Rock Festival, Bosnia and Herzegovina** in 2019. However, according to the organisers, the split "foreigners-local population" is 50:50. The festival is highly integrated in the tourism offer and is an integral part of the cultural calendar of the country.

The “Kozara” International Folklore Festival is mainly attended by the local population. As it is an important part of the cultural program of the area, it is advisable to extend the scope.

### 3.2.5 Neighbouring countries

According to information from the National Statistical Institute, the number of overnight stays in tourist accommodations of foreigners in **Moldova** was 340 345 in 2018. The number significantly lower than in the other countries from the Danube region. The relatively low interest towards Moldova as a tourist destination in general also suggests that the citizenship of the festival goers is predominantly Moldovan.

The “Danube Day” was visited by about 1000 people in 2019 (according to information on the official website of the event). The event organisers say it also attracts guests from other countries - from neighbouring Romania, Ukraine, even France. Although the ratio of foreign and local visitors is 20:80, attracting visitors from other countries should be considered as a success, especially since most of the “Danube Day” celebrations in the Danube region are targeted mainly at the local population.

The “Danube Day” is an important part of the tourism development of the region. The city of Giurgiulesti has a population of only 2,866 <sup>18</sup>, and an event involving over 1,000 guests is undoubtedly important for local cultural, tourism and economic development.

There is no information available on the number of visitors to the **Bostaniada**. It is important to note, however, that the event attracts the interest of visitors from other countries - according to the organisers, 20% of the guests of the Bostaniada are foreigners - mainly from Romania.

The Bostaniada is an alternative and interesting way of presenting and preserving the cultural heritage of the region, despite the not so high popularity.

Moldovan **Danube Rock Festival** is a well-attended and anticipated



*Bostaniada*  
Source: <https://locals.md/>

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<sup>18</sup> National population count in Moldova, 2014. National statistical institute, Moldova

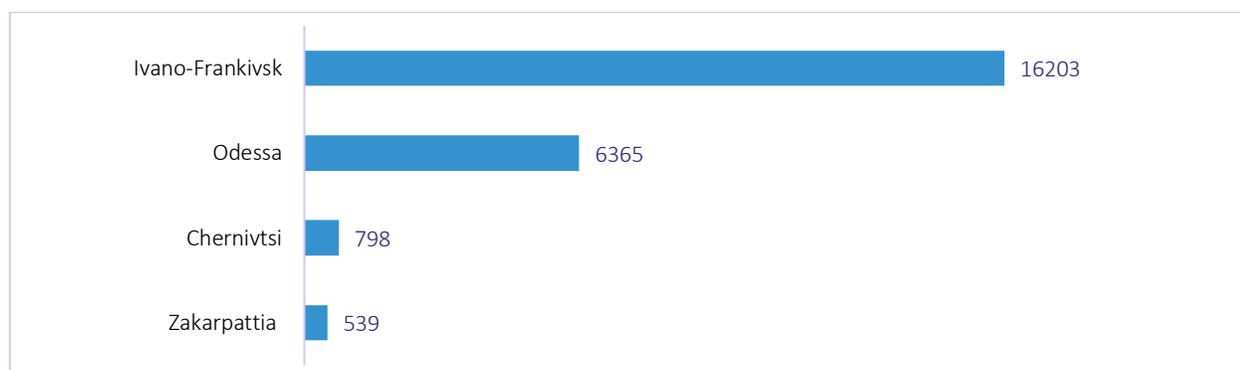
event by Moldovans. There is no official information on the number of participants, but based on the popularity of the festival on social networks, it can be concluded that it attracts high interest. This also suggests that it would have strong presence in the tourist offer.

A fact which also implies its strong integration into the tourist offer.

According to data from the National Statistical Institute of **Ukraine**, in 2018 the total number of tourists serviced by tour operators and travel agents was 532 744, of which 15% (75 945) are foreign tourists<sup>19</sup>. When it comes to revenue from tourism in the regions, which is part of the Danube Strategy, there is a noticeable difference between Ivano-Frankivsk and Odessa on the one hand, and Chernivtsi and the Transcarpathian regions on the other.

*Графіка 15. Revenue (in thousands, Eur) from the provision of tourist services (excluding VAT, excise duties and similar mandatory payments) for 2018 Areas which are part of the Danube Region.*

*Source: National statistical institute, Ukraine. Calculations and visualisation: "GFK-2016" Consortium*



The “Danube Sich” Rock Festival and “Your Country” festival take place in Izmail, Odessa region. There is no data on the volume of tourists in the city or the number and nationality of festival goers. Given the fact that the events are widely popularized on the Internet and social networks, we can assume that the festivals have high level attendance.

The “Danube Day” is an event that is mainly aimed at the local community, which is poorly featured in the tourist offer. In order to increase the sustainability of the results achieved so far during the celebration of the “Danube Day”, it is recommended to explore more actively a joint celebration with the neighbouring countries in the Danube region - such as Romania and Moldova.

<sup>19</sup> National statistical institute, Ukraine. The number of tourists serviced by tour operators and tour agents.

### 3.3 Marketing methods and promotion channels

All 42 festivals which were subject of the following analysis share one common trait – **all events are popularised via the most efficient modern method of information sharing – social networks.**

Irrespective of whether the festival is one of the major events in the common European cultural calendar, attracting hundreds of thousands of guests from all over the world, or is an event of local significance with several hundred visitors from the surrounding areas - all of them use **Facebook** as the main communication platform.



Danube river  
 Source: <https://pixabay.com>



*At this point, our marketing activities are limited to word-of-mouth distribution. This is the best way of popularisation, if you want your festival to grow slowly and maintain a certain core of visitors. We promote our festival mainly through social networks - Facebook and Instagram, with around 5% of our budget being spent on advertising*

*(Organiser, Danube Day in Belgrade)*

*The festival (Medieval festival in the Severin fortress) is popularised via the social network, TV, posters who get distributed and posted around town..*

*(Representative of local administration, Turno-Severin)*

This approach should come as no surprise, having in mind the trends in communicational development. The popularity of this type of information source, the speed of information dissemination and the ability to reach large and diverse audiences makes social media an effective and efficient method of sharing information.

But the question is not whether or not a festival has a Facebook page, group and event. At a time when information sharing is fast and reaches a large number of people in a very short time, maintaining a Facebook page is crucial. Or even more specifically- promoting it, posting news and events, making it come into life in a simple and attractive way.

*How do people find out about those festivals?*

*“Via the Facebook of Youth house, of our groups if we have any, radio, TV, posters. On the municipality’s Facebook page, their “Rousse-town of the free spirit” page.”*

*(Local administration representative, Rousse)*

Based on discussions with the organisers and representatives of the local organization, as well as a review of Facebook pages of the festivals, it can be concluded that relatively **little time is invested in their support**. Exceptions are the festivals in Austria, Novi Sad and Germany, which attract hundreds of thousands of people a year.

*And finally – how do you popularize these festivals? What kind of media channels do you use?*

*“Newspapers, local television, local radio, Facebook, Instagram”*

*(Local administration representative, Ingolstadt)*

*“We have a special Facebook page – “July morning – Tutrakan”, we also have a Facebook page “Fiery Danube”, so all this reaches people.”*

*(Organiser, Tutrakan)*

The “Danube Day” Facebook page is an example of a well-maintained, active and popular profile. What is noticeable, however, is that it is rare to see a Facebook page for the individual events, which take place in each of the 14 countries. This further contributes to their low popularity among foreign tourists and limiting the festival to the specific part of the local population seen as a target group.

Creating a profile / page / event for each country where “Danube Day “ is organised and making sure it has a relatively high activity on Facebook, will make a significant contribution to the promotion of the International Danube Day. It will also allow the creation of a network of Danube countries that can easily communicate with each other, share events from other countries, promote their activities and even - gather ideas for joint initiatives.



The social networks **Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest** are also relatively popular. These channels are extremely convenient for promoting festivals - they allow you to maintain event channels and share photos and videos among a large audience. The **Pinterest** platform is somewhat more unknown. Is it basically a social site for sharing photos in the format of “bulletin board”. The service allows users to share and manage themed images. Using this type of social network will help significantly to make the festivals more popular.



**Print media** are much less commonly used. This is understandable when taking into perspective the constantly changing needs of the population. However, it is noticeable that the festivals, which are mainly aimed at the local population and the event has bigger regional significance than a national one or for the Danube region as a whole, find a tangible place for advertising in **the local print media**.

*How do you promote the festivals? What channels do you use to share information?*

*P: The channels are various digital media. Focus News, 24 hours, information agency Standard, of course Facebook. We have a special Facebook page – “July morning – Tutrakan”, we also have a Facebook page “Fiery Danube”, so all this reaches people.*

*(Organiser, Tutrakan)*



**Radio** audio can also be included as one of the popular information channels. This can be explained in two ways that are not mutually exclusive: the radio is a traditional and tested method of promoting music festivals. Even nowadays, people continue to listen to radio (in the car or while traveling in public transport), and such audience might be more interested in attending a festival.

Furthermore, regional radio is very important for disseminating information locally – it is popular because the population can learn about the specific news from the area. In this connection, festivals, which are of mainly local and regional importance, find an important place in local radio news and advertising.

*“Radio Horizon, BG Radio, Radio Shumen. We have used all mass media to be able to advertise those events”*

*(Organiser, Tutrakan)*



And last but not least comes the inclusion of information about the festivals in **regional tourist guides, brochures, centers and websites containing information on the cultural programme of the city**. The distribution of advertising in these editions will greatly contribute to attracting tourists. Also, the placement of information in such sources can be accomplished with the assistance of the Municipality and other state and local structures. On the one hand, this will significantly reduce the cost of advertising and on the other will contribute to building and maintaining relationships and collaboration with other organizations.

In summary, we can say that **social networks definitely need to have their place** in the ways for promoting the festivals. Facebook, as well as the social media that allow photo and video sharing, should be a main communication channel.

Festivals that are primarily of regional importance and are targeted mainly at the local population should be promoted in **local newspapers, radio and other regional methods of gathering information**. An additional way to attract foreign tourists are tourist guides, tourist-focussed websites, printing and distribution of posters and leaflets.

### 3.4 Relationship and cooperation with organisations and administration



Danube river

Source: <https://pixabay.com>

When it comes to the formed relationships and the cooperation with organizations and administrations, there is no similarity between the festivals, which seemed to be a characteristic of the communication methods in use.

We need to take into account a few factors, which affect the presence / degree of affiliation of the festivals with other organizations and administrations. First of all, it is the **overall**

**politics / psychology** of the country and its population, related to the organization of festivals and to what extent it is accepted that

the events should be supported somehow by the state administration or other organizations. Of high importance is the **human / resource capacity** - some of the events (e.g. in Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova) are organised by a state institution whose limited financial and human resources do not allow recruitment of staff which can focus on the demand and cooperating with other organizations and administrations. And last but not least, it has to be taken into account to what extent **the festival offers connections with other organisations**. Depending on their topic and target group, in most cases the events are "closed" and become limited to contacts only with other organizations, mainly for administrative queries.

The exploration of the relationships and cooperation with other organizations and administrations is of particular importance for the fulfilment of the objectives of this contract. As it was outlined in the introductory part of the report, the EU Strategy for the Danube region puts an emphasis on the need to strengthen **inter-organizational contacts**. So far, the cooperation is weak, and where it exists, it is solely as a result of the festival becoming an "institution" that must be managed and developed.

① Examples of such festivals are the “International Danube Festival” in Ulm, Germany; “Donauinselfest” in Vienna, Austria; “EXIT” in Niš; “Bratislavský majáles” in Slovakia and others. What’s typical for them is **highly developed cooperation system with private organizations, sponsors, programs funded by the European Union, local and state administrations and others**. Unfortunately, festivals that engage multiple and diverse organizations both by their type and activity can be found mainly in the EU Member countries, Zone 1 (Austria and Germany) and to some extent in Slovakia, Hungary and Croatia. The “EXIT” Festival in Novi Sad is an exception, probably because of its established status as a world-class festival.

In order for a festival to be functional and successful, it is necessary to have a network of contacts and connections to cover all mandatory elements.

In relation to this, we can say that for the festivals listed above, the **areas and forms of cooperation are various**. These events receive the support of the **local administration** (most often the municipality), which allows the festival to be held, and on frequent occasions - aids the organisers with the provision of stage, sound equipment and other type of infrastructure. The presence of support from the local administration is also important in terms of promoting the city and its culture. In most cases, the municipalities are even actively involved in the promotion of the festival, by adding information to the tourist guides (online and printed), posting a message / advertisement on the municipality website, distributing posters in the administrative structures / tourist offices and others. This makes **the active role of the local administration more than necessary**.

Another important, but not as crucial element is the cooperation with the **currently active European Union Programme**. Having in mind the objectives of the EU Strategy for the development of the Danube region, the festivals that are organised with the support of the Danube Transnational Cooperation Program are important and their numbers need to keep growing. This will contribute to the coordinated organization of events, the boost of inter-organizational communication and, to some extent, the narrowing of the differences between different groups of countries in the Danube region.

A major problem with organizing festivals is **funding**. However, the events listed above can boast with a good number of **sponsors** who support significantly the existence of the festivals. There is no information available on how these sponsors are selected, as well as what amount of money and what elements are given by them.

The third but not the least important group are **organisations/administrations of other towns/countries**. The connection with foreign organisations on the Danube river can be seen mainly between neighbouring **municipalities/countries**. An example for this is the international Danube festival in Ulm. This cooperation is seen mainly in the participation of representatives/groups from Danube region countries.

2 The most vivid example of such cooperation between organizations / administrations from the countries in the region is the “Danube Day”. It is an event with built traditions and coordination, thanks to which “Danube Day” is celebrated in all 14 countries in the region. However, the more limited, closed nature of the event can be seen as a bit of a negative characteristic - the celebration of the International

Danube Day is often aimed only at the local population, and only in rare cases (e.g. in Bosnia and Herzegovina), it is organised with another country from the region.

Often, the organisers of “Danube Day” highlight the lack of support from NGOs and / or public administration as a problem:

*„The NGOs don’t promote the festival among their members”; “The state administration does not help with these tasks [for organising “Danube Day”]; We can’t find a private organisation which could help organise this event.”*

*(Organiser, “Danube Day” in Bosna and Herzegovina)*

*Generally speaking, what are the main barriers to increasing the cooperation with other organisations (irrespective of whether they are NGO, private organisations or public sector)?*

*“Weak network of partners and limited resources (technical, people , etc.)”*

*(Organiser, “Danube Day” in Moldova)*

Given the fact that “Danube Day” is likely the only network of festivals that operates in all 14 countries within the Danube Region, it is particularly important to take certain measures aimed at including a wider range of stakeholders. At this stage, the public administration is involved in the event by organizing meetings, conferences and discussions at local and national level in most countries. However, their support needs to be more visible - for example, through funding, popularising the event and others.

3 There is also a group of festivals that have **a more limited connection with other organizations**, and the contact with the administration is mainly related to securing technical resources. Examples of such countries in the Danube region are Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Moldova, and to some extent Serbia. Some of the festivals in these countries are often organised by the municipalities, which already limits the development of the festivals. The programme and the participants often remain the same and the number of the latter even decreases due to lack of funding.

It is recommended for measures to be taken to ensure that this situation is avoided. Festivals should have the full support of the municipality - it can be expressed in financial and human resource, but local festivals should also be supported in finding sponsors, specialists in certain areas, as well as stimulating participation in international and regional programmes. Otherwise, the participants and guests of the

festivals will gradually lose interest in the event, which in turn will lead to a consistent reduction in the budget and the enthusiasm of the people who organise it.

*The whole time I've been meaning to ask you – what is the role of the municipality, because after all you're promoting it too?*

*“Every festival is included in the national cultural calendar, the calendar of the municipality and the city, but unfortunately without the financial help of the Municipality itself, it is simply a presence. Each festival is under the patronage of the mayor. He greets the participants at the beginning of the festival, welcomes the participants at the reception. It is more a moral support than anything else. For us, the financial support is more important. Unfortunately, I explained to you that our Municipality is in...”*

*(Organiser, Vidin)*

4 Of high importance is the strengthening of the links between the different countries in the Danube region - especially when countries without direct access to the Danube river are included. Festivals organised on the territory of these countries are weakly linked to the Danube's cultural heritage and identity. Because of this, it is advisable to build co-operation between countries such as Czechia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and their neighbours for the joint organization of festivals and / or “Danube Day”.

### 3.5 Sources of funding

Funding has always been a sensitive topic, especially when it comes to organizing an event and / or executing an idea.

When it comes to festivals, the situation is no different. Generally speaking, the festivals that we covered and are organised in the Danube Region can be grouped as follows:



Danube river

Source: <https://pixabay.com>

1 Festivals that receive financial support from **the state / local administration, the non-governmental sector and private individuals**. They also often use the profit from the festival. This type of "funding from different sources" is normal for major festivals, their budgets are managed by professionals and a dedicated department is put in place for sponsor management. These are the festivals "International Danube Festival" in Ulm, the Festival of the Danube Island in Vienna, EXIT in Novi Sad and, in part, the Bratislava Summer Festival.

2 The second group of festivals does not have such a variety of sources of funding available, neither is the team so big and specialized. Most often, festivals such as the "City Festival in Ingolstadt", the "Bodrog Festival of culture and tradition" and the "Danube Day" in the 14 countries of the Danube Region receive their funding from the **local administration / municipality and specialized European funds**. This type of funding is the most popular and the most applicable to mid-range festivals. It is recommended to stimulate interest in applying for such European programs - by organising awareness campaigns on the financing methods, what programmes are available, what is the eligibility criteria, etc.

*„Usually with funds from the EU [we organise the festival] and co-financing from the local and regional authorities, Ministry of tourism and other“.*

*(Organiser, Croatia)*

*„They [the festivals] are financed by the Sombor municipality or the administration of the Vojvodina province or the state administration in Serbia, with the help of foundations. Mainly, it is NGOs applying for such funding. In our view, festivals like ours should be financed by the EU and other organisations, related to the Danube region.“*

*(Local administration representative, Backi Monostor, Serbia)*

3 The third group includes the festivals, which are organised entirely at the expense of the local administration and minimal personal income. These are some of the events taking place on the territory of Bulgaria and Romania. Given the fact that both countries are part of the European Union, it is strongly advisable to communicate the possibility of external financing. It is necessary to involve NGOs in the process, to clarify ways to apply and to provide support for the launch of a project for funding.

*Is anyone helping you with this?*

*“No, unfortunately no one is helping us. At the beginning of the festival, when we started organising it in previous years, we also organised an initiation committee for its planning and execution. We included businessmen and potential partners, but over time, everything dropped out because we don't have many economically stable units and you can't constantly want from one person, there is a limit. That is why we then approached the Vidin municipal council with a request to fund the festival. In some years funds were allocated, but in the last 10 years this has stopped. Our municipality has budget deficit, owes money and needs to make repayments for previous years, so they do not allocate us any money and we rely on our own funds at the library and therefore minimize the expenses, to make sure the event takes place.”*

*(Organiser, Vidin)*

## 4 CONCLUSION



Danube river

Source: <https://pixabay.com>

The Danube region boasts plenty of festivals. Most of them are in the summer, especially when they take place in the immediate vicinity of the river – in the nature. The multicultural character of the area suggests that many events will take place, ranging by their type, size, aim, traditions and history.

The entire 2852-kilometer river offers the chance to visit music festivals which attract tens of thousands from the whole world; historic restorations in medieval and Renaissance castles located along the Danube; to try dishes

specific to each region; to hear traditional songs; to see national dances from the various Danube regions and much more..

This richness of cultural diversity, however, brings a few negatives - there are **noticeable economic differences** between the countries of the Danube region - both between the EU member countries and the countries that are part of the European family . It can be said that **the culture behind organizing festivals, the approach and the attitude of local and national administration towards the need for holding such events are at different levels in the countries of the Danube region**. In some countries, festivals are an event for all, in whose creation and celebration everyone takes part. In others, they are organised with a minimum of financial and human resources, the participants in the events are almost always the same, and quite often, with their relatives, they are the only visitors. This somehow wears out the region's potential.

One of the main recommendations in the EU Strategy for the Danube region is namely bridging the gap and involving stakeholders more actively in the whole process. In this respect, we would recommend focusing / putting an effort on the following aspects:

① **Making the local structures aware** - administration, non-governmental organizations, associations and others, of **the possibilities to apply for an EU project**. An awareness campaign and / or training should be conducted, focussed on which projects are relevant, what the requirements are and how such project can be managed and reported successfully.

- 2 The lack of **concepts / ideas / executions during the organization of festivals in countries** like Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine and Moldova is very noticeable. In this part of the Danube region it is rare to see events which would involve a wide range of cultural events and which could turn into a celebration for the whole society. Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia can be taken as an example in organizing such festivals.
- 3 One of the goals of the “Blue book” is to develop a platform, including information about existing and planned cultural events, as well as summarising them in a joint data base. Furthermore, it can include **certain examples for good practices, cooperation opportunities, feedback and other.**
- 4 There needs to be a focus on the strengthening of the inter-institutional relationships and the organisation of joint festivals – extremely important would be to include the countries with no direct access to Danube river.