



National reader tourism and sustainable mobility Bulgaria

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1 INTRODUCTION

An entire work package of the SEEMORE project is dedicated to the **transfer of knowledge**, which takes place at different levels and among different stakeholders all along the project life cycle.

At national level, two **National Transfer Seminars** are organised by each of the eight SEEMORE regions in their respective countries. The National Transfer Seminars gather representatives of tourist destinations that are not participating in the SEEMORE project, but **share the same (or similar) challenges of the SEEMORE regions in terms of tourists' mobility management**. The aim of the National Transfer Seminars is to **disseminate the innovative approach** to tourists' mobility management developed within the SEEMORE project, thus facilitating and encouraging the **transfer of best practices** in this field.

In order to facilitate discussion, a **National Reader on tourism and sustainable mobility** is prepared by each SEEMORE region before its National Transfer Seminar and distributed at the event. According to a common approach, the National Readers first briefly present the SEEMORE project, then give an overview of the developments on tourism and sustainable mobility in the relevant country and finally list the innovative actions implemented within the SEEMORE project that are going to be presented at the related seminar.

The present document is a report on the two **National Transfer Seminars** held in the SEEMORE region of **Dobrich** (Bulgaria). The first seminar was organised by the **Club for the Sustainable Development of Civil Society (CSDCS)** – the body responsible for the implementation of the SEEMORE project in Bulgaria – and took place in **Sofia** on **29 January 2014**. The second seminar was organised jointly by **CSDCS** and the **Municipality of Burgas** and took place in **Burgas** on **22 May 2014**. The first chapters of this document replicate the content of the **National Reader** produced for the events. They include a general presentation of the SEEMORE project (chapter 4), an overview of the national developments in the field of tourism and mobility (chapter 5) and some of the measures implemented by CSDCS (chapter 6). Chapter 7 and chapter 8 report on the National Transfer Seminars: they illustrate the participants in each event, the points of discussion and the events' main outcomes. The related agendas and lists of participants can be found as Annexes to this document.

This report is addressed to visitors, residents, local and regional authorities at tourist destinations in Europe, mobility providers, hotels and leisure attractions. It is intended to **disseminate the innovative approach** to tourists' mobility management developed within the SEEMORE project, thus **facilitating and encouraging the transfer of best practices** among different regions sharing similar features and challenges.



2 REVISION AND PEER REVIEW HISTORY

Version Number	Date	Comments	Peer reviewed by (Name, Organisation)
1.0	11/11/2014	First draft sent for peer review	N/A
1.1	19/11/2014	Second draft	Piotr Kuropatwiński, PSWE
1.2	26/11/2014	Third draft, with some corrections from the peer reviewer already accepted, sent from CEI to CSDCS for further amendments	N/A
1.3	01/12/2014	Fourth draft provided by CSDCS	N/A
1.4	09/03/2015	Fifth draft (including conclusions) prepared by CEI and sent to CSDCS for check and final contribution	N/A
1.5	09/03/2015	Sixth draft provided by CSDCS	N/A
1.6	10/03/2015	Final version uploaded in the internal website by CEI	N/A

Table 1: Document revision and peer review history



3 GLOSSARY

Abbreviations provided in this report

Abbreviation	Full name
MM	Mobility Management
EPOMM	European Platform on Mobility Management
EU	European Union
PT	Public transport
CSDSC	Club for the Sustainable Development of Civil Society
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
WTO	World Tourism Organisation

Table 2: Abbreviations used



4 PRESENTATION OF THE SEEMORE PROJECT

The SEEMORE project aims at promoting and enhancing **sustainable mobility in tourist destinations**. Studies show that leisure travel accounts for **50%** of all travel mileage in industrialized countries and is expected to grow further in the coming years. The impact of growing leisure travel is especially felt in tourist regions that have to cope with **seasonal changes in transport demand** and road congestion because of high levels of private car use. An inefficient organisation of mobility can lead to a decrease in the **attractiveness of a destination**. Also, destinations need to develop **new products** for growing target groups like low-cost travellers; ageing tourists that do not want to drive a car; and tourists demanding sustainable holidays.

For tourist destinations to remain competitive and attractive in a global market, **cooperation between local actors from the tourism and mobility sectors is essential**. Within the SEEMORE project, eight European coastal regions are setting up these cooperation frameworks to carry out the following actions:

- Provide **improved information** for visitors about sustainable mobility options like public transport, cycling, walking and electric mobility;
- Develop **integrated tourist products** that combine leisure and public transport lines;
- Create **new and improved sustainable mobility options** and services for visitors, including public bicycles and new public transport services.

Project activities

The implementation and evaluation of sustainable mobility actions in eight coastal regions form the core of the SEEMORE project. To improve the quality of the SEEMORE regional actions, the partners develop an overview of good practices and recommendations from existing studies. Throughout the project, SEEMORE organizes several public events to exchange experiences with other tourist regions. Practitioners from other regions are able to access interesting project outputs on the project website: www.seemore-project.eu.

Partners

CINESI Transport Consultancy Spain

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Stratagem Energy Ltd Cyprus

Horários do Funchal Public Transport Portugal

Local Councils' Association Malta



5 SOME ASPECTS OF TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY IN BULGARIA¹

In many European countries, land use trends, past road construction efforts and the mass availability of private cars have led to the breaking of traditional relationships between home, work, leisure and the environment. The consequent **changing geographies and sociologies of mobility** have brought about an increase in travelling throughout Europe, particularly by car. This has led to new risks for the preservation of the environment.

In recent years, **mobility management** (MM) has gained importance in European metropolitan areas as a way of addressing the complex urban transport problems and improving the effectiveness of traffic systems management measures. It is a demand-management oriented approach to passenger and freight transport and involves new partnerships and set of tools to support and encourage changes in attitude and behaviour in favour of both more sustainable modes of transport and alternatives to travel. A central idea in the development of MM is the integrated approach to transport planning and policy making with emphasis on the potential of soft measures to enhance the effectiveness of hard measures.

It is therefore a major challenge for cities to implement **new transport and mobility solutions**, capable to meet the demand for a higher accessibility and, at the same time, minimise the impact on the environment. This is valid also for **touristic sites**, where the high number of visitors (which expected to grow further in the coming years) causes increased traffic, air pollution and noise.

With a rich history and a diverse physical landscape, the potential for **tourism in Bulgaria** is enormous. The tourists' flow – that has substantially increased over the past decade – is currently concentrated in some beach and mountain resorts, despite the many attractions scattered all over the country. In fact, thermal springs, archaeological sites and beautiful sceneries provide opportunities to develop health, cultural, and eco-tourism, but these sectors remain underdeveloped. A diversification of the tourism industry and its spread throughout the country is therefore increasingly needed. The main tourist assets of Bulgaria can be grouped as follows:

- Black Sea resorts: 380 kilometres of coastline with beaches, mineral water springs, holiday villages and campsites
- Snow sports resorts: Borovets, Bansko, Pamporovo and Aleko
- SPAs: Bulgaria has around 600 thermal springs, but the majority of SPAs are underdeveloped and have poor facilities

¹ This section is partly taken from the EPOMM Mobility Management Monitor Bulgaria 2011.

- Historical tourism: currently underdeveloped, but presenting a great potential thanks to the presence of many archaeological sites
- Eco-tourism: Bulgaria has 3 national parks, 10 natural parks and 90 reserves.

Some data on mobility in Bulgaria

Motorisation: 740 cars per 1000 inhabitants in Sofia; 390 cars per 1000 inhabitants in average for the rest of the country (NSI, 2010)

Modal split²:

	Public transport	Rail	Road (car, van, or truck)	Walking	Cycling	Other car (e.g. car-sharing)	Other (e.g. waterways)
Passenger transport (intra city)	25%	10%	47%	14%	4%	N/A	N/A
Passenger transport (inter city)	64,37%	3,6%	31,4%	4%	4%	N/A	0,03%
Freight transport	N/A	20%	65%	N/A	N/A	N/A	15%

Table 3: Modal split

² Sources: Bulgarian Transport Strategy 2020; NSI prognostic data 2010-2020; CSDCS studies in the frame of the BENEFIT project 2010-11.

6 MODERN TENDENCIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN BULGARIA

The tourism industry keeps an important place in the world economy, contributing significantly to the GDP of many countries. According to the **World Tourism Organisation (WTO)**, the number of tourists in 2012 reached 1 billion and this figure is expected to grow by 3,8% by 2020 and by 2,9% in the period 2020-2030, despite the negative economic outlook in Europe and worldwide.

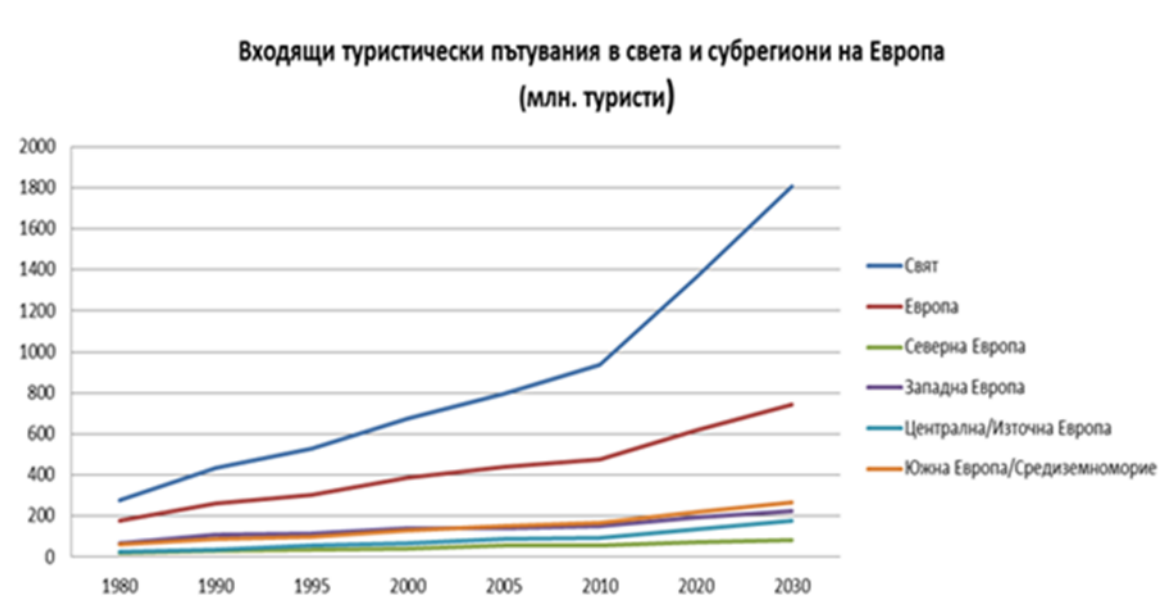


Figure 1: Trends in the world-wide tourism industry

In **Bulgaria**, tourism is already a stable industry, significantly contributing to the national economy for the following reasons:

- It represents a considerable share of the GDP (12-18%);
- It provides many job opportunities – 300.000 employees working full time and 500.000 employees working part-time;
- It creates chances for attracting investments and opportunities for public-private partnerships;
- It helps developing family businesses;
- It helps stimulating regional development and reducing regional differences;
- It helps preserving the environment and the cultural and historical legacy.

According to the predictions of WTO on the development of tourism in Central and Eastern Europe, the less known destinations in this area will rapidly become more visited. During summer

2013 **Bulgaria** was visited by 3,5 million tourists, which means 5,4% more than in the same period in 2012. A growth was registered in guest visits (22,6%), business visits (2%) and holiday visits (5,2%). Considering these figures, if the country manages to offer the necessary appeal to tourists, trips to Bulgaria are likely to grow by 4% annually by 2020 and by 3% annually in the period 2020-2030, meaning that the number of tourists visiting the country in 2030 will be twice as large as in 2012.



Figure 2: Trends in the Bulgarian tourism industry

As shown in the graph below, visitors travelling to Bulgaria come mainly from the following five countries: Russia 25% (in blue colour), Germany 25% (red), Romania 21% (green), Greece 18% (violet) and Ukraine 11% (light blue).

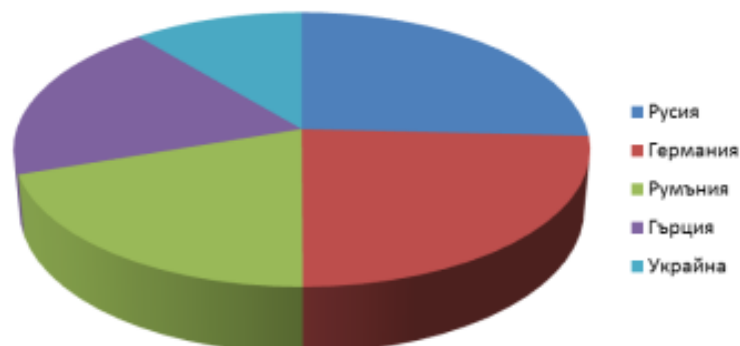


Figure 3: Main countries of origin of tourists in Bulgaria

Considering the **potential for the development of the tourism industry in Bulgaria**, the following actions are needed:

1. Developing tourism products that will overcome the tourist season and make Bulgaria a popular tourist destination all over the year, thus building a special emotional connection with the country;
2. Developing a tourist offer suitable for the elderly (65+), e.g. packages combining cultural, rural and eco-tourism or focussing on health tourism through SPAs offering treatments with Bulgarian mineral water and medical muds;
3. Tailoring the advertisement to elderly tourists;
4. Looking for investment opportunities in the tourism industry.

In early 2014 the Ministry of Economy and Energy developed a **strategy for the sustainable development of tourism until 2030**. The strategy foresees the participation of the national tourism industry in the following actions, aimed at enhancing tourism in Bulgaria:

- Creating a positive image of Bulgaria and making the country more recognizable as an appealing all-year-round tourist destination with a precise national identity and preserved cultural and natural heritage;
- Increasing the quality of the tourist offer;
- Increasing tourists' safety and preserving tourists' rights;
- Developing politics in favour of product specialisation;
- Developing policies in favour of the domestic market and products matching the domestic market;
- Developing innovative communication technologies and online services in the tourism industry;
- Developing a "responsible" tourism.

The vision underlying the strategy is to transform Bulgaria into a well-known tourist destination with an easily recognisable identity, ranking among the **five top tourist destinations in Central and Eastern Europe**. The tourism sector will develop on the basis of **long-term partnerships** at national, regional and local level between all interested stakeholders – national, regional and local authorities, companies, NGOs, local communities and international partners.

The **main aims** of the strategy are the following:

- Positioning Bulgaria as a high-class tourist destination on the world tourism market;
- Introducing international standards and European best practices in the Bulgarian tourism industry;
- Guarantee the participation of Bulgaria in the European Commission's initiative "Destination Europe 2020" to define a long-term strategy for the promotion of Europe and Bulgaria as an appealing tourist destination;
- Promoting sustainable mobility in tourist areas;



- Training of the tourism industry's staff;
- Tackling the issue of over-building in seaside and mountain areas;
- Improving the transport infrastructure and enhancing air transport.



7 SEEMORE ACTIONS IN DOBRICH

7.1 Dobrich strategy

Objective: More attractive and environment friendly seaside Dobrudza through sustainable tourism and transport development

The **main goals** are as follows:

- To develop a strong information and promotion campaign: introducing the concept of “Mobility Management” in the region and explaining the benefits of sustainable tourism and transport development;
- To introduce new mobility measures in resort areas thus linking tourism and transport sectors;
- To increase the energy effectiveness of transport.

7.2 Dobrich action plan

- **Measure 1.1: Definition and elaboration of the integrated sustainable mobility information package for visitors**, with description of the tourist attractions and how to reach them (information on parking facilities, PT options, pedestrian areas and routes, guided tours, etc.). Elaborated in Bulgarian, Russian, English and Romanian. Distribution of up to 2.500 copies.
- **Measure 1.2: Regional visitors’ sustainable mobility guide including complete and integrated information on mobility and integration of mobility information in hotels’ package to customers and in hotel services.** 50 hotels to be involved. Elaboration of leaflets with timetables and maps showing the main tourist attractions and how to reach them by PT.
- **Measure 1.3: Training on integrated sustainable mobility options** for 80 professionals in direct contact with visitors (bus drivers, staff working in hotels and leisure activities).
- **Measure 1.4: Photo-competition and exhibition** for promoting sustainable mobility
- **Measure 1.5: Promotional video** on local attractions and sustainable access to them
- **Measure 1.6: Dissemination of SEEMORE advertising materials** (posters, teaser-postcards, T-shirts, caps) among the target groups – tourists, hotels’ and restaurants’ staff, etc.
- **Measure 2.1: Increased PT selling points** in hotels, terminals of regional transport providers, travel agencies.



- **Measure 2.2: Integrated packages (sustainable mobility + leisure activities)** with the goal of selling at least 1.000 integrated packages, combining travel and leisure activities during the last project summer.
- **Measure 2.3: Parking policies** to discourage car use to access leisure destinations and urban areas with visitors' concentration. Five meetings with local authorities to discuss parking policies, leading to a decrease of 200 free parking spaces in town centres or leisure attractions and shaping new parking places at the outskirts of the city centres.
- **Measure 3.1: Improving PT services** for visitors and residents by launching new PT lines during the high season and combined tickets to major events.
- **Measure 3.2: Cycling services**
 - Introducing bicycle sharing/rental schemes and providing free bicycles in Albena hotels
 - Installing signs on the two existing eco-paths from Kavarna to the preserved area of Yailata and Bolata, thus allowing their use by cyclists
 - Introducing 5 kilometres of new segregated bicycle lanes in Dobrich and 100 new public parking places for bicycles.
- **Measure 3.3: Training of local planners** on how to consider visitors when planning mobility measures and how to consider mobility when planning tourist infrastructure, resulting in a SUMP for Kavarna.



8 FIRST SEEMORE NATIONAL TRANSFER SEMINAR IN BULGARIA

The **first SEEMORE National Transfer Seminar** in Bulgaria was held in **Sofia** on **29th January 2014**. The event was organised by **CSDCS** and gathered representatives of the following tourist destinations:

- Municipality of Burgas
- Municipality of Dobrich
- Municipality of Gabrovo
- Municipality of Haskovo
- Municipality of Montana
- Municipality of Pazardjik
- Municipality of Pleven
- Municipality of Ruse
- Municipality of Sofia
- Municipality of Stara Zagora
- Municipality of Varna
- Municipality of Veliko Tarnovo

Moreover, representatives of the following **organisations** took part in the event:

- Sofia Mobility Centre
- Tourism Department, Ministry of Economy and Energy
- Bulgarian Railway Company
- Bulgarian Association of Hotel and Restaurant Owners
- Bulgarian Association of Tourist Agencies
- University of Sofia, Council for Tourism Education

The event opened with a buffet lunch in order to make the guests socialise, introduce themselves and get acquainted with each other.

Following the reception, two representatives of CSDCS presented the **SEEMORE project**. Ms. Lucia Ilieva introduced the project goals, partners and activities; Mr. Veselin Grozdanov presented the results achieved in the Bulgarian target region, showing on graphs how the situation concerning sustainable mobility improved. Afterwards, the SEEMORE video was shown and project materials were disseminated among the participants.

The **guest regions** were invited to present their tourist destinations as well. Representatives of the municipalities of Varna, Burgas and Sofia presented some touristic activities, while representatives of the municipality of Montana illustrated the project “C-Liege”, co-funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe programme, related to logistics in the mountain tourist regions.



Figure 4: Mr. Grozdanov presenting the results achieved within SEEMORE in Bulgaria

Advertising materials from the guest regions were disseminated.

The guests showed great **interest in the SEEMORE project**; there were many questions about the implemented activities, their results and the participation of local stakeholders. Some regions expressed their desire to participate in similar projects together with CSDCS. A **discussion on which SEEMORE measures could be introduced in other tourist regions** closed the event.

The seminar proved that the interest in mobility issues is quite high and people are rather willing to attend such events; however, travel costs for participating in the seminar remain a challenge for local government representatives and are thus likely to hamper proper participation. To overcome this obstacle, CSDCS exploited **synergies with other EU co-funded projects**: the SEEMORE National Transfer Seminar was organised immediately after the training of Bulgarian municipalities under the BUMP project, which took place during the morning on the same day. This allowed most of the representatives from remote areas to come with the mayors involved in the BUMP project, using a free transport service provided by the respective municipalities.



Figure 5: Participants in the first SEEMORE National Transfer Seminar in Bulgaria

9 SECOND SEEMORE NATIONAL TRANSFER SEMINAR IN BULGARIA

The **second SEEMORE National Transfer Seminar** in Bulgaria was held in **Burgas** on **22 May 2014**. The event was organised by **CSDCS** together with the **Municipality of Burgas** – known for being the Bulgarian most active municipality as regards participation in EU co-funded projects – and gathered representatives of the following tourist destinations:

- Burgas
- Dobrich
- Gabrovo
- Haskovo
- Kardjali
- Kavarna
- Montana
- Nesebar
- Pazardjik
- Pleven
- Pomorie
- Ruse
- Stara Zagora
- Varna
- Veliko Tarnovo

Moreover, representatives of several **tourist agencies** and **tour operators** took part in the event.

Following the welcome address of the Mayor of Burgas, the **SEEMORE project** was presented to the participants by the team of CSDCS. The project goals and activities were described, focussing on the **“Plan of Action for Sustainable Mobility in Tourism”** adopted by the target region of Dobrich. Furthermore, the comparative results between the initial mobility data in the region and the achieved improvements in summer 2013 were shown. Finally, the actions to be performed during the last project implementation season (summer 2014) as well as the results expected at the end of the project were illustrated. The CSDCS team also briefly mentioned the other projects related to mobility CSDCS is a partner in, as well as the opportunities offered for **exchange of experience** at national and international levels.

Following the intervention on SEEMORE, the representatives of the **Municipality of Burgas** presented the projects related to tourism and mobility under implementation in the city, with a focus on the municipal SUMP.



In the last part of the seminar, discussions took place on topics related to tourism and mobility, as well as on the possible **transfer of experience** between the different projects in these fields. Many participants expressed their satisfaction with the measures already implemented within various projects and the **progress** made in several areas of the country was jointly recognised by saying “we are on the right track”. The participants finally envisaged to **cooperate more closely** in future activities.



Figure 7: The CSDCS team presenting the SEEMORE project during the second SEEMORE National Transfer Seminar in Bulgaria



Figure 6: Participants in the second SEEMORE National Transfer Seminar in Bulgaria



10 CONCLUSIONS

All SEEMORE National Transfer Seminars underwent an evaluation procedure to assess, among others, if and how the tourist destinations that took part in the events ultimately implemented SEEMORE-like measures in their respective areas. According to the results gathered in Dobrich, the most **replicated measures** were low-rate bike rentals, training the staff of tourism-related businesses on sustainable mobility, electric transportation and sustainable parking policies. The major constraints to sustainable mobility enhancement resulted to be financial and political barriers, followed by organisational and technical ones. Despite this, several destinations involved in the seminars declared they plan to **introduce a wide range of SEEMORE-like measures by 2020**, including the elaboration of sustainable mobility information packages, promotional videos on sustainable mobility options to reach local attractions, low-rate bike rentals, training the staff of the tourism industry, electric transportation and sustainable parking policies.

More specifically, the destinations of Burgas and Veliko Tarnovo intend to develop sustainable mobility information packages similar to the ones produced within SEEMORE; low-rate bike rental schemes will be introduced in Pleven, Ruse and Burgas; promotional videos will be produced in Varna, Burgas and Veliko Tarnovo and nearly all destinations involved in the seminars intend to train the staff of the tourism industry on sustainable mobility. Moreover, electric transportation is now a priority for Gabrovo and Pleven; sustainable parking policies (e.g. introduction or enlargement of blue zones, creation of green and/or yellow zones) are under consideration in many localities (such as Ruse, Varna, Pleven, Montana, Kardjali and Veliko Tarnovo) and seven destinations will develop their SUMP³ drawing inspiration by the one developed in Kavarna³.

To conclude, the SEEMORE project linked the tourism and transport sectors for the first time in Bulgaria, introducing **sustainable mobility as a precondition for the competitiveness of tourist destinations**.

³ The abovementioned SUMP³s are to be developed within the frame of the EU co-funded project [BUMP](#).



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