



# BULLETIN

## European Destinations of Excellence

### ONLINE NEWSLETTER

#### FOR THE BULGARIAN EDEN DESTINATIONS LAUNCHED

**UNDER THE PROJECT "COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE BULGARIAN EDEN DESTINATIONS - SECOND EDITION" IMPLEMENTED BY THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM IN AGREEMENT WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR GRANT No. 699265 OF 18th JANUARY 2016.**

**(issue 2, April 2016)**

#### **NEWS AND EVENTS RELATED TO THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATIO**

##### **First meeting of the representatives of the Bulgarian EDEN destinations**



In March 2016 the first national meeting with representatives of some of the best Bulgarian EDEN destinations took place. The event was organized by the Ministry of Tourism within the project "Communication Campaign to Promote Bulgarian EDEN Destinations - Second Edition", financed under the EU COSME 2014 – 2020 Programme. The EDEN destinations were represented by officials of the municipalities of Belogradchik, Kardzhali, Kazanlak, Sapareva Banya, Kavarna, Vratsa, Belitsa, Kyustendil and Lukovit.

introduce the objectives and upcoming activities and to identify the expectations and ideas for good performance on behalf of the representatives of the EDEN destinations. It is important for us to work in cooperation in order to achieve a sustainable high-quality result", pointed out Milka Nanova, Director of the Programmes and Projects Directorate at the Ministry of Tourism.

During the meeting a whole spectrum of ideas, options and possibilities were discussed for the organization and conduct of informative tours of tourist sites on the territory of the Bulgarian EDEN destinations, which would be of great interest for the foreign visitors. Subject of the discussion were also events and festivals taking place each year or scheduled for the years 2016 and 2017, which will also be promoted under the project.

"The idea for this meeting at the beginning of the project implementation is to

It became clear during the meeting that the implementation also involves making video materials of the EDEN destinations, as well as printed matter. Part of the project will be a facebook game titled "My EDEN destination", in which children from across the country may participate with paintings and the best works will be displayed on postcards or magnets, which is expected to further promote the destinations.

As a result of the meeting the representatives of the EDEN destinations declared their readiness to participate actively in the whole process of implementation of the project and shared good practices from their work on the promotion of the tourism on the territory of their regions.

## **PRESENTATION OF THE EDEN DESTINATIONS**

*Each edition of the newsletter will introduce one of the Bulgarian EDEN destinations.*

### **Kardzhali**



In the heart of the Eastern Rhodope mountain on both banks of the ancient Arda River is located Kardzhali - a town of extraordinary past and rich history. For three millenniums this region was a cradle of different civilizations and cultures. The region is a unique mixture of historical monuments dating back to most ancient times, unique natural phenomena and harsh mountain massifs.

The ancient and medieval town of Perperikon, fully hewn into the rocks, is one of the most ancient monumental megalithic monuments from the time of the Thracians. Here we discover the old Thracian testament, bearing reminiscence of the god of wine Dionysus. A magnificent cult center, a spectacular architectural ensemble - these are only part of the descriptions of this incredible town. This is the earliest known ever capital of the Thracians. Today the ancient glory of Perperikon revives. The sacred town is an unprecedented combination of uniqueness in architectural, historical, natural and multi-religious aspect, one of the miracles of the world.

One of the largest fortresses situated high above in the Rhodope mountain is the medieval fortress Monyak, which was of great strategic significance, because it guarded the Jelezni Vrata pass and the avenues of approach to the medieval town situated around "Saint Joan The Precursor" Monastery. It is situated near the village of Shiroko Pole 4 km to east of Kardzhali in a protected area of over 50 decares. A military station used to be situated in the area and the fortress provided shelter to the population from the villages in the valley of the Arda river in times of military action. The Monyak fortress is also associated with the crusade of 1206.

## Annual events in the destination:

01 - 30 June - International Art Festival "Perperikon"

The festival is associated with the pan-European idea for the storage of the rich cultural heritage diversity. It has become a bridge connecting the past, present and future of the Balkan peoples. Theater, dance and musical formations from the country and abroad take part in the festival. The festival takes place in the ancient scenery of Perperikon.



### When you visit Kurdzhali, we recommend you also visit:



#### **The Regional Historical Museum**

The Regional Historical Museum - Kardzhali was established in 1965. It contains more than 45 thousand exhibits tracing the life in the Eastern Rhodope mountains from the most ancient times to the beginning of the XX century. The museum is situated in a beautiful impressive building built in 1920, an architectural monument of culture.

[http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/378/Regionalen\\_Istoricheski\\_muzej\\_Kyrdjali](http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/378/Regionalen_Istoricheski_muzej_Kyrdjali)



#### **The Ancient and Medieval Town of Perperikon**

Fully hewn into the rocks, Perperikon is one of the most ancient monumental megalithic monuments from the time of the Thracians. Here we discover the old Thracian testament, bearing reminiscence of the god of wine Dionysus. The sacred town is an unprecedented combination of uniqueness in the architectural, historical, natural and multi-religious aspect, one of the miracles of the world. The ancient and medieval town of Perperikon is

included in the list of the 100 National Tourist Sites of the Republic of Bulgaria.

<http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/311/Perperikon>



### **The Medieval Fortress "Monyak"**

One of the largest fortresses situated high above in the Rhodope mountain is the medieval fortress Monyak, which was of great strategic significance, because it guarded the Jelezni Vrata pass and the avenues of approach to the medieval town situated around the "Saint Joan The Precursor" Monastery. It is situated near the village of Shiroko Pole 4 km to east of Kardzhali in a protected area of over 50 decares.

[http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/268/Krepostite\\_Monyak\\_Kyrdjali](http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/268/Krepostite_Monyak_Kyrdjali)



### **The Medieval Monastery Complex "Saint Joan The Precursor"**

There are few towns in Bulgaria with a restored monastery complex. The medieval monastery complex "Saint Joan the Precursor" founded in VI - VIII century was the center of one of the largest medieval dioceses - Achridos and is an example of typical Byzantine architecture. In 1998, a

unique tomb was discovered in it, which had preserved the relics of the senior diocesan bishop of the XIII - XIV century.

[http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/241/Manastirski\\_komplex\\_SvJoan\\_Predtecha](http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/241/Manastirski_komplex_SvJoan_Predtecha)



### **The Temple "St. Mary's Assumption"**

The temple is located in the residential district "Gledka" in Kardzhali. The holy shrine comprises a church and a monastery. The church is a basilica with three naves built in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is used both as a church and a monument of culture. The tonality of the murals is impressive - mixing blue and yellow is often used for the Christian symbols in the Middle East.

The church keeps a small piece of Christ's cross, which was found in a relic site, during the excavations of Perperikon in 2002.

[http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/331/Hram\\_Uspenie\\_Bogorodichno\\_Kyrdjali](http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/331/Hram_Uspenie_Bogorodichno_Kyrdjali)



### **The Petrified Wedding**

The natural landmark The Petrified Wedding is extremely valuable with its multiple rock formations resembling people, horses, birds and generally looking like a wedding procession. According to the legend this is a wedding procession, which had been turned into stone by the natural forc-

es outraged at the impure thoughts of the father-in-law when he saw the bride's beauty.

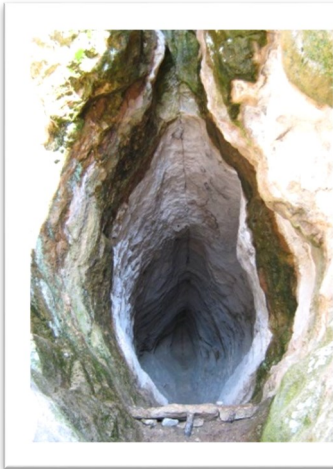
[http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/222/Vkamenenata\\_svatba](http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/222/Vkamenenata_svatba)



### **The Stone Mushrooms**

The stone mushrooms are rock formations located east from the village of Beli Plast on the road between Kardzhali and Haskovo. The protected area is on 3 hectares. The rock formations have the shape of natural mushrooms with pink stems and greenish caps. The height of the stems and the diameter of the caps are up to 2.5 m. They are sculptured in riolithic volcanic tuffs.

[http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/401/Kamenni\\_gybi](http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/401/Kamenni_gybi)



### **The Utroba Cave (Womb Cave)**

The Utroba Cave sanctuary is the most incredible facility from Thracian times. Every day, when the sun is in its zenith, a ray of light resembling a phallus appears slowly crawling on the ground. Only once a year, perhaps during the winter solstice, it reaches the rock altar, as if the sun is symbolically inseminating the earth and so life is born. The whole cave is 32 meters deep and is shaped by the ancient people as a womb. The area around the entrance is a huge religious place with rocky niches hewn into the rock.

<http://tourism.kardjali.bg/?pid=1,20>



*This material was created within the framework of the project entitled Communication Campaign to Promote Bulgarian EDEN Destinations – Second Edition, under a Grant Financial Aid Agreement No 699265 of Jan 18, 2016, as implemented with the financial support of the EU's COSME (2014-2020) program. The contents of this material presents the views of the Ministry of Tourism only and is the latter's full responsibility; this document should not be deemed to represent the official opinion of the European Commission and/or the Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency, or any other EU body. The European Commission and the Agency bear no responsibility for the benefit, which will be created out of the information contained in the document.*