

TERMS OF DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE VARDAR REGION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Abstract: In this study, the conditions for development of tourism in the Vardar region in the Republic of Macedonia, tourism in the city of Veles, tourist attractions, cultural and social manifestations in Veles, municipalities: Lozovo, Chashka and Gradsko, archeological site Stobi, tourism in the city of Negotino, wine tourism in Negotino, tourism in the city Demir Kapija, wine museum in Demir Kapija, tourism in the city of Kavadarci, famous tourist attractions, cultural manifestations, mysterious Alshar, tourism in the city of Sveti Nikole, famous tourist attractions, cultural manifestations in the Vardar region of the Republic of Macedonia, religious buildings in the Vardar region, domestic and foreign tourists in the Vardar region in the Republic of Macedonia.

Keywords: tourism, region, attractions, manifestations, visitors.

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Introduction: Tourism covers a set of business organizations, businesses and government agencies that drive goods and services and store means of transport, programs and resources for travel and leisure. The tourism sector can be defined as a set of those economic and trade activities that produce goods and services that are intended for foreign and domestic tourists. By the (20th century), a small number of people traveled for pleasure, most journeys were driven by trade, going to pilgrimage, and other religious motives, or to education. Today in (XXI century), tourism motivation is more complicated and most often covers several reasons for traveling. For example, if you go somewhere for health reasons, concerts that are held at a selected destination help in making final decisions for walking just in that place.

Due to the numerous influences that it has, tourism is an important factor for regional development.

Firstly, the positive economic impacts of tourism on local, regional and national levels are highlighted, especially in places that are tourism-developed, giving them the opportunity for equal access, economic growth and development. The positive effects of the development of tourism in the Republic of Macedonia are seen in the increase in the number of tourists on an annual basis. Its impacts are particularly high on regional development, in which countries see an opportunity for economic progress. Tourism development is associated with regional development as it is associated with a range of activities. According to the European requirements, the Republic of Macedonia is divided into eight planning regions: Skopje region; Northeast planning region; East Planning Region; South-East planning region; Vardar Planning Region; Pelagonia planning region; Southwest planning region; Polog planning region. In addition, the scientific work will analyze the Vardar planning region, as well as the opportunities offered by it for the development of tourism.

1. Tourism

The tourism industry, which began its mass in the 1950s (XIX century), has been growing fast and secure over the past 60 years, in terms of revenue generated and the number of people traveling abroad. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), more than 935 million people have traveled internationally in recent years, compared with 25 million in 1950. People perform recreational activity in nature, such as water recreation (bathing, rowing, thermal and thermomineral waters), as winter recreation (skiing, sledding, hiking, etc.).

2. The tourism in the Vardar region

The Vardar region covers the central part of the Republic of Macedonia and extends along the Vardar River and the Ovche Pole valley. According to the data from 2016, this region has the smallest number of inhabitants, or 7.4% of the total population. It extends to 16.2% of the territory of the Republic of Macedonia and at the same time is the least populated region with only 37.8 inhabitants per 1 km².



Figure 1. Geographical position of the Vardar region in the Republic of Macedonia.

The region consists of nine municipalities: Veles, Kavadarci, Negotino, Sveti Nikole, Demir Kapija, Caska, Gradsko, Rosoman and Lozovo. It is bordering on the southern side of Greece, which is of great importance for encouraging cross-border cooperation. Through the corridor 10 (apthopathic Friendship) and the M-5 highway, the region is connected to all parts of the country, making it frequent in terms of the number of passengers passing by. The richness of water resources, rivers and artificial lakes, favorable climatic conditions, ie the influence of the Mediterranean climate that penetrates the valley of the Vardar River in this region, as well as the specific geomorphological configuration of the terrain, are the main conditions for this region to be recognizable by the production of fruit and a vine with distinctive geographical origin. In this region, most of the wine cellars and processing facilities for vines in the Republic of Macedonia are concentrated.

Table 1. Basic data for the Vardar region

Number of municipalities	9
Number of settlements	215
Total population, Population Census, 2002	154 535
Estimated population, 2016	152 742
Population density, 2016	37.8
Number of dwellings, Population Census, 2002	61 367
Average number of persons per household, Population Census, 2002	3.2
Live births, 2016	1633
Deaths, 2016	1773
Natural increase, 2016	-140
Immigrants from abroad, 2016	105
Literacy rate of population over the age of 10, Population 2002	96.3
Activity rate, 2016	62.8
Employment rate, 2016	49.3
Unemployment rate, 2016	21.6
Average gross wage per employee, 2016	25 896
Average net wage per employee, 2016	17 699
Number of primary and lower secondary schools, 2016/2017	82
Number of upper secondary schools, 2016/2017	11
Number of students in primary and lower secondary education, 2016/2017	13 378
Number of students in upper secondary education, 2016/2017	4 856
Number of graduated students from universities, 2016	593
Number of active business entities, 2016	5 481
Number of enterprise births, 2015	528
Number of enterprise deaths, 2013	578
Number of enterprise deaths, 2014	465
Number of enterprise deaths, 2015	430
GDP per capita, 2014	274 404
Number of beds, 2016	1 818
Number of tourists, 2016	26 064
Number of nights spent, 2016	41 643

Source: State Statistical Office, Publication 2017

The Vardar planning region covers an area of 4,042 km², or 16% of the territory of the Republic of Macedonia. The region is characterized by an exceptional low population density of 38 inhabitants per km², and four of the municipalities in the region are rural. The share of the urban population is much greater than the people living in the countryside, although 4 of the municipalities are rural, which can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Participation of the urban population in the Vardar region in the Republic of Macedonia.

	Municipality	Area km ²	Residents km ²	Populated places	Participation of the city population
1	Veles	427	129	29	84,8
2	Gradsko	235	16	16	
3	Demir Kapija	309	15	15	72,1
4	Kavadarci	992	39	40	75,3
5	Lozovo	166	17	11	
6	Negotino	478	40	19	69,1
7	Rosoman	132	31	10	
8	Sveti Nikole	483	38	33	74,3
9	Caska	820	9	42	
	Total	4042	38	215	68,7

Source: <http://vecer.mk/ekonomija/ima-shto-da-se-vidi-vo-veles>, visited October 2017

The region has excellent natural, cultural, historical and communication potentials for tourism development. The location is a serious potential for the development of transit tourism, and the established Tikvesh wine road (Negotino, Kavadarci, Demir Kapija and Rosoman) is the basis for the

development of alternative and wine tourism, while the Kozuf ski center complements the base with opportunities for development of winter tourism . At the same time, the existence of hunting grounds allows the development of hunting tourism. In addition, the region has a wealth of cultural heritage, the archaeological site of Stobi, a number of traditional buildings, historical monuments. Climatic conditions, relief and hydrography in the region create excellent conditions for cultivation of different types of crops, about 12% of the total agricultural area in the Republic of Macedonia is located in this region. Most developed in the region is the cultivation of the vineyard, after which the region is recognizable. It follows the cultivation of cereals, ie wheat, barley and corn. The Vardar River, which has the largest water capacity in the country, passes through the region and provides producers of agricultural products with water for irrigation. Large rocky surfaces in Demir Kapija can be quite attractive for mountaineers.

3. Tourism in Veles

A City of Revivalists, Revolutionaries and Poets - a cradle of Macedonian culture. Veles is located in the central part of the country, in the middle course of the river Vardar. It lies on the main thoroughfare on the Balkan Peninsula following the Moravian-Vardar valley, and the main railway in the Republic of Macedonia passes through the city, from which two branches are separated: the one for the eastern part of Macedonia (Stip and Kochani) and the other for the southwest part (Prilep and Bitola). After Skopje, Veles is the most important railway node in the Republic of Macedonia. Veles is an old city. During the course of history, the city often mused the name. It is mentioned in the (III century) under the name (Villa Dawn), meaning (city-bridge). Later, the city was named after the city (Kyungli). He received the present name in the (VII century) with the arrival of the Slavs in the Balkans). The main feature of the Veles economy is the industry. Veles has great potential for tourism development, especially on the transit route, because it is near the (Friendship Highway) and the International Airport - Skopje. Strategic locations attracting tourists' attention are Lake Mladost and the ancient city of Stobi. Here are the old and widely known Veles architecture with wide verandas and narrow alleys, sacred objects from the (XIII century), dozen cave churches in the canyon of the Babuna River, the memorial houses of Glavinov, Dzinot, Racin and many other celebrities are only part of the great cultural treasure of Veles. According to the statistics, about 20 years ago Veles was visited or over 50,000 guests passed through it. The most frequent were transit tourists, but it was not small for domestic ones who not only stayed in catering facilities, but also visited numerous celebrities in Veles and its surroundings.

3.1. Tourist artworks in Veles

As the famous tourist attractions in the vicinity of Veles is the ancient city of Stobi.

Beside him, the sites Breza and Pešti, which are abundant with caves with archaeological remains of the Neolithic, early Christian caves, are also significant. Attraction for the tourists was also the Memorial Kosturnica which is located above the entrance to Veles and the City Clock in the very center of the city. Also, as the main attraction for the visitors, Veles is the lake.



Figure 2. Panorama of the city of Veles, Veles Lake (from left to right), the course of the river Babuna through the gorge, the City Clock in Veles, the Memorial Oasis in Veles.

4. Municipality of Lozovo

The municipality of Lozovo is located in the central part of the Republic of Macedonia and takes up part of the fertile sheep Polish plains. The beautiful green spaces and the golden fields of life give special beauty to this area and attract the attention of every visitor. The central road passes through the central road M5 - Veles-Strumica, as well as the railway line Veles-Kocani, which enables the municipality to be in contact with other territorial units. Borders with four neighboring municipalities: Sveti Nikole, Veles, Stip and Gradsko. In the booming municipality, the private initiative is especially in trade, catering, small farms modern farms and in the development of small capacities in the construction industry.



Figure 4. Geographical position of the Municipality of Lozovo in the Republic of Macedonia

5. Municipality Caska

The municipality of Caska is located in the central part of the Republic of Macedonia. It covers an area of 825 km², and is among the three largest municipalities in Macedonia. Neighboring municipalities bordering on them are Veles and Gradsko in the east, Zelenikovo and Studenicani to the north, Makedonski Brod and Dolneni to the west and Prilep and Kavadarci to the south. The municipality is characterized by a very complex relief, composed of several morphological and tectonic units. The area is predominantly hilly - lowland, except the part where the massif is on the mountain Jakupica, which is very mountainous. The massif of the mountain Jakupica is composed of the five interconnected mountains: Jakupica, Dautica, Karadzica, Golesnica and Kitka. At the height of (300 meters above sea level), in the locality of Deep Dol, near the village of Dolno Vranovci in the Municipality of Caska, the center of Macedonia is marked.



Figure 5. The point that marks the center of the Republic of Macedonia in the municipality of Caska.

Municipality of Caska has attractive elements for tourism development. A number of attractive locations are suitable for the development of sports, especially hiking, hunting and fishing. Especially interesting for speleologists is the Damjanitsa cave, as well as a number of pits. The real challenge for mountaineers is the ridge that lies below the top of the Solunska glava, which is located at a height of (650m) and a width of (2km) is one of the largest in the Balkans. The waterfall of the Babuna river is located at the source of the river Babuna and has a height of about 15 meters. The cave at the sources of the river Babuna is the largest potential cave complex in the Republic of Macedonia.

Locations in the immediate vicinity of the settlement Caska are the following:

Marble, a settlement that is the Neolithic time. On this site (1989) found a ball flute, ocarina old (6000). *Vrcvi*, Archaeological site from the Roman period, located in the immediate vicinity of the settlement of Chashka, near the village Otishtino, *Kapinovo*, *Konjarnik*, Roman settlement, *Sulinar*, Roman period site, *Monastery*, archaeological site, necropolis dating from the late bronze period of early iron, *Tulana*, Roman necropolis, *Keramidnica - Black Pear*, archaeological site from the Roman period of the discovered settlement and necropolis.

6. Municipality of Gradsko

Gradsko is historically known as a significant traffic and trade crossroads. It derives from its geographical location, which is mainly in the flat part of the center of Macedonia, spread on both sides of the secondary Povardarie. It crosses and crosses significant road and railway traffic nodes, which create a connection to the north with the southern part of the Balkans. Its territory covers an area (290

km²), on which many settlements exist. It points out the favorable hydrographic situation in the municipality which is again the main reason and condition for the excellent conditions and development of gardening. In the western part of the Municipality of Gradsko stretches Mount Kleppa, which has ideal conditions for sheep breeding. The territory of the municipality is abundant with historical past, cultural landmarks, artifacts, sacral and secular monuments. One of the most significant for both Gradsko and the whole Macedonian history and culture is the ancient site of Stobi. It is one of the most important ancient buildings in the world whose secrets and values are still being explored. Monument to the sacral architectural heritage is the monastery of Saint Archangel Michael located on Mount Klapa. It was erected as a small church in the period from (1695 to 1705), which is confirmed by the bronze seal of the monastery, in the content of which is the name of St. Archangel and the image of Archangel Michael. That Gradsko has a landmark in the city's settlement is also the architectural pearl, the railway station built in (1871), one of the oldest and the most beautiful in the Republic of Macedonia.

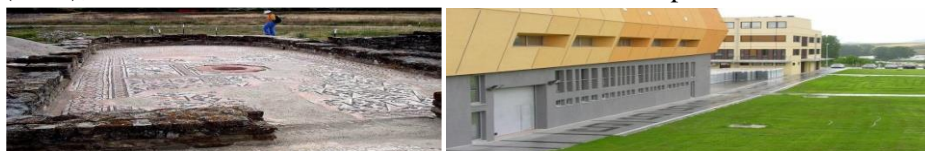


Figure 6. The archaeological site of Stobi with interesting mosaics (from left to right), winery stables in the Municipality of Gradsko.

7. Tourism in Negotino

The territory of the municipality of Negotino covers an area of (412 km²) and is located in the central part of the Republic of Macedonia in the region of the secondary Povardarie and covers a significant part of the Tikvesh valley on both sides of the river Vardar. Through the municipality, the M-1 highway (the Aphrodite friendship renamed in 2018), the regional road R-108 and the railway line.

The name of the city is derived from the toponyme (Antigonea), a settlement that existed until (518), in the ancient period in the immediate vicinity of today's Negotino. As a city is mentioned in the first half of the (XIX century). With the construction of the Prilep-Stip road in (XIX century), Negotino gained importance as a stopping station and grows into a town. It is even more noticeable with the construction of the Vardar Railway. For the development of transit tourism Negotino has a hotel from the B category and the car camp Antigona. The favorite picnic place for the Negotino people is the monastery of St. George with its surroundings. In the town itself there are several privately owned catering facilities that with their facilities offer top service to guests, traditional Macedonian cuisine and the famous Negotinska pita specialty. **As important manifestations that are held in the Municipality of Negotino and can attract the interest of the visitors are:** *The wine festival* held on the occasion of the religious holiday St. Trifun (protector of the growers), *Manastirska večer and Negotino Fair* (20-23 September) on the occasion of the religious holiday "Mala Bogorodica", *Since September 19, 2003*, with the commissioning of the renovated old town bazaar, as a manifestation for nurturing the tradition of the serenades, the guilds and *the bard's spirit of the city, evening*. As a special convenience for the development of tourism in the Municipality of Negotino, the proximity to the archaeological site of Stobi should be outlined. There are opportunities for sports tourism. In 2001, under its concession, the hunting association Vardar has received five hunting grounds on the territory of the municipality of Negotino, with an area of (28,000 ha.). A mountaineering home can be built in the village of Kalanyevo, because Mount Serta offers an excellent opportunity for mountain tourism development.



Figure 7. Panorama of the city of Negotino (from left to right) and the wine region of the Negotino region.

8. Tourism in Demir Kapija

The municipality of Demir Kapija covers an area of (309 km²). On its territory there are a total of 15 settlements, while the share of the urban population in the total population is (75.3%). Demir Kapija is located in the southern part of Macedonia, in the southeastern part of the Tikvesh valley. The immediate relay around Demir Kapija has a special place in the development of tourism with the Demir Kapija gorge, the rarely beautiful walls, the canyons of the Iberli river which flows into the river Vardar in the gorge itself and divides the eastern walls of the gorge masses into two parts, then the opening of the tunnel creates the canyon of the Iberli River. The gorge is about 19 km long and is located between the Tikvesh valley in the northwest and Boyjia in the southeast. The sides are built of blue shales, which lay layers of blue lime with Mesozoic old age. They are up to (1,000 m) high and are very steep. They are the sharpest in the stone part at the entrance of Vardar into the gorge. A special element for the future development of tourism is the natural rarities of this region, that is, the speleological natural phenomena created in the limestone masses of the Demir Kapija gorge. Many caves are known, of which the larger and more important are Bela Voda and upper and lower Zmeiovec. These caves are natural rarities that can be used for tourist purposes. The Demir Kapija Museum was established in 2010 and has three settings: a wine setting, the only one of its kind in Macedonia, an archaeological setting and a gallery with a presentation center.



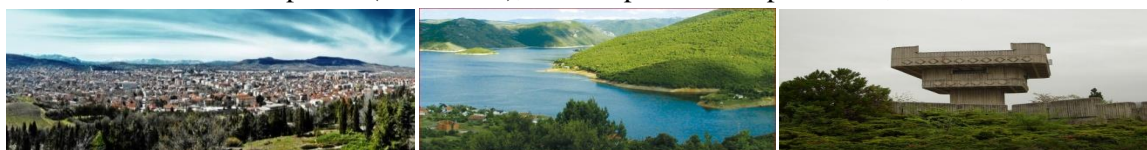
Picture 8. Panorama of the city Demir Kapija (from left to right), Demir Kapija gorge.

9. Tourism in Kavadarci

As a city settlement it is mentioned even in (1823). In (1857) it is a small town with about (2,000) inhabitants and a special economic center. The population was engaged in agriculture, trade and crafts. More significant growth was observed after the construction of the railway line Thessaloniki-Skopje (1872-1874), when the wine and poppy trade developed. Even then, Kavadarci has a role of administrative-administrative center for the Tikvesh area. The territory of the Municipality of Kavadarci is located in the area of the secondary Povardarie and the part of the Black Irish, from the dam "Tikves", to the watershed in the river Vardar. The legacy of the medieval period is represented through the beautiful churches, the Mark Tower, the cave beauties and many others.

9.1. Famous tourist attractions

Kavadarci is a city that can attract a large number of tourists with the Tikvesh lake and the Memorial oak from the period (1041-1945), which opened on September 7, 1976, and others.



Picture 9. Panorama of the city of Kavadarci (from left to right), Tikvesh lake and Memorial ossuary.

9.2. Famous cultural manifests

The most famous cultural manifestations in the Tikvesh region are: Tikvesh vintage is a manifestation that gives a special mark to the city and coincides with the celebration of the liberation day of Kavadarci on September 7th. The event symbolically begins with the release of clusters by the Mayor of Kavadarci, T'k - Tak Fest is a rock festival organized in honor of the prematurely dead Macedonian rock legend Trajko Karov. The festival was first held in (2011), and "Santa Cope Borina" - a festival of jokes and jokes that takes place during the Evening Evening at the city square and where three best jokes are selected.

9.3. The mysterious Alshar

Alshar mine is located (40 km) south of Kavadarci, near the village of Rozhen near Majdanska Reka and is unique in many things in the world. Alshar has recorded dozens of minerals so far, of which only seven are in Macedonia. In (250,000 tons) ore contain 2% arsenic, 2,5% antimony and 0,1% thallium, making the mine the richest and only thallium site in the world, used for space exploration and telecommunication technologies. A special and most important rarity in Alshar is the lorandite, a thallium mineral.



Figure 10. Mineral Lorandite from the Alshar mine near the village of Rozen.

10. Tourism in Sveti Nikole

The municipality of Sveti Nikole is located in the central-eastern part of the Republic of Macedonia, the municipality covers an area of (480 km²) and accordingly it is one of the largest municipalities in Macedonia, with 33 villages. The municipality is located between the municipalities of Veles, Lozovo, Stip, Karbinci, Probishtip, Kratovo. Ovce Pole is a valley that lies in the confluence of the Sveti Nikole River, the right tributary of Bregalnica. The Ovce Pole valley is located at an altitude of (200 to 400 m) and is affected by continental and Mediterranean climate impacts. The city of Sveti Nikole is the central part of the valley. The ancient name of the city and the municipality of Sveti Nikole is (Probaton). The decisive historical moment is (1292), when the name Sveti Nikole is accepted by the construction of the church of St. Nicholas. In (1845) Sveti Nikole grew into a town. The density of the population of Sveti Nikole is not that large and it amounts to (38.5 inhabitants per 1km²). There are a total of (18,497) inhabitants in the municipality.

Cultural activities are realized through two municipal institutions: Cultural Center "Krste Misirkov" - Sveti Nikole and National Museum - Sveti Nikole. On the territory of the municipality, the folk ensemble "Janko Gligorov", which works in the composition of the House of Culture, has been singled out continuously for more than 40 years at various festivals in Macedonia and abroad. Also known is the folk group "Sweet Secret", which is known in Macedonia and abroad.

10.1. Famous tourist attractions

Sveti Nikole is a city that can attract a large number of tourists to the famous Devil's Wall and Gradishte - Bil Zora.



Picture 11. Panorama of the city of Sveti Nikole (from left to right), devil wall.

11. Cultural manifestations in the Vardar region

Throughout the year, in the Vardar region, a large number of manifestations are held not only with a national but also with an international character. *In the Municipality of Veles manifestations of international character are:* Racin's meetings in June, Veles in July, Stobi in July-August, Pitaya in November, Children's Racin's meetings in November, Painting Dummies colony in August, Vardar Regatta in September; *In Municipality of Gradsko manifestations of municipal character are:* day of the municipality December 26; *In the Municipality of Demir Kapija manifestations of municipal character are:* Demir Kapija Fair August 28, the liberation of the city on August 28 and St. Trifun on February 14; *In the Municipality of Kavadarci, manifestations of municipal character are:* Tikvesh vintage on September 9, St. Trifun on February 14, Kavadarci fair in October; *In the Municipality of Lozovo manifestations of international character are:* Pelivian fights on May 7; *In the Municipality of Negotino,*

manifestations of municipal and international character are: November 8th on November 8th, traditional non-metropolitan fair on 21-23 September, multimedia non-ethnic evening on September 19th, monastery evening St. Georgi on September 20 and Sunday of the wine, St. George. Trifun International from 10 to 14 February; *In the Municipality of Sveti Nikole, manifestations of municipal and international character are:* Todorica International, fine art colony-Gurishte, Spring-laughter + love, Golden Voice on 17-18 December, St. Nicholas Patron of the city on December 19, April 1 April and cultural summer in July-August; *In the Municipality Rosoman manifestations of municipal character are:* Duhovden in May and praskubber in May; *In the municipality of Caska, manifestations of municipal character are:* healthy food fair on March 21, children's art colony from 23 to 29 June, paragliding bunch of variable date and comprise in November.

12. Religious objects in Vardar region

Medieval, sacral monuments from the Ottoman period and the period of revival are only part of the beauties offered by this region.

Table 3. Churches and monasteries in the Vardar region in the Republic of Macedonia.

Monasteries		Churches
Veles	"St. Archangel Michael", St. Dimitrija, St., "John the Baptist"	"St. Panteleimon", "The Holy Spas", "The Holy Mother of God", "St. Petka", "St. Nikola", "St. Nedela", "St. Cyril and Methodius"
Gradsko	Monastery "St. Archangel Michael" - Chichevo	Church "St. George"
Negotino	St. George's Monastery	The church "St. Athanasius"
Kavadarci	Mokliski Monastery, Polog Monastery, the monastery of St. Archangel Michael.	Church of Saint Demetrius, Church of the Holy Mother of God.
Demir Kapija		Church "Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos"
Sveti Nikole	Monastery "Saint Panteleimon"	Church "St. Nicholas", Church "Sveti Stefan", Church "Sveta Lidija"
Caska		Church "St. Clement of Ohrid", St. Nicholas, St. Atanas.
Lozovo		Church "Sveta Petka" - Lozovo
Rosoman		Church "Holy Trinity"

Source: Vardar Diocese.

13. Visitors from domestic and foreign tourists in the Vardar region

In this section we will get acquainted with the visits by domestic and foreign tourists who have visited the Vardar region throughout the years.

Table 4. Domestic and foreign tourists in the Vardar region

Vardar Region			
	2014	2015	2016
Number of rooms	666	675	699
Number of beds	1,677	1,696	1,818
Total number of tourists	23, 035	24, 308	26, 064
Domestic tourists	5, 467	7, 981	8, 375
Foreign tourists	15, 200	16, 327	17, 689
Total nights spent	39, 662	39, 636	41, 643
Domestic nights spent	12, 001	13, 806	16,557
Foreign nights spent	27, 661	25, 830	25, 086

Source. Statistical Yearbooks for the Republic of Macedonia: 2015, 2016 and 2017

Conclusion

From this scientific paper we can conclude that the Vardar region can be reached by using any kind of transportation. Infrastructureally, he is well connected with the neighboring regions, Skopski, Pelagoniski, southeast and east. With neighboring countries, it borders only Greece. The rich cultural heritage with many monuments, archaeological sites, cultural institutions and museums can attract a completely different profile of tourists. The Vardar region abounds in an extremely rich cultural heritage,

prehistoric settlements, monuments from ancient and Byzantine period, numerous churches and medieval monasteries, a wealth of local traditions, customs, architecture and artworks.

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