NATURAL, RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL-HISTORIC VALUES OF THE SANDANSKI SPA (PIRIN MOUNTAINS)

Abstract: One balneological resource of extraordinary value, to which the town of Sandanski owes its existence, are the mineral waters. Within the whole region their total discharge is estimated at 65 l/s while for the town of Sandanski only it is about 25 l/s. Their temperature varies from 33 °C to 86 °C and the mineral content in them is poor - 0.78-1.02 g/l. That is why diseases can be treated both by drinking the water and by bathing. Besides its diverse natural scenery the Sandanski spa is famous for its important historical events. Melnik is a real monument of the Bulgarian culture. It is designated as a cultural and historical reserve and a museum town and has got the status of a unique settlement of international importance for economic tourism.

Key words: Town Sandanski, balneological resource, Melnik.

Извод: Балнеолошки ресурс изузетне вредности, коме град Сандански много дугује, су минералне воде. У оквиру целе регије, њихова укупна издашност се проценује на 65 l/s, док за сам Сандански износи око 25 l/s. Температура воде варира од 36 до 88 °С, док је минерализација слаба - 0.78-1.02 g/l. Зато је лечење могуће само комбинаци јом пијења воде и купања. Поред природне разноликости, бања Сандански је позната по важним историјским догађајима. Мелник је прави споменик бугарске културе. Представља културни и историјски резерват и град-музеј, и има статус јединственог насеља међународне важности за економски туризам.

Кључне речи: Град Сандански, балнеолошки ресурс, Мелник.

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Introduction

The town of Sandanski and its region are well-known as a major climato-balneological centre of national and international importance. The development of this spa resort was officially regulated and promoted by the Council of Ministers Order #18, issued on March 30, 1981.

The recognition of Sandanski as a major spa resort in Bulgaria is due to the abundant and exceptionally conducive natural and anthropogenic resources.

Lying in the southernmost part of Strouma valley, which is widely open to the Mediterranean climatic influence, the Sandanski spa is considered to be the hottest place in the country. Its proximity to the majestic Pirin Mountain makes it attractive not only as a starting point for routes, cutting through it, but also as a region, endowed with remarkably varied scenic beauty.

Plenty of curative mineral waters spout out in and around the town which since remotest antiquity have attracted visitors for medical treatment and recreation.

The Sandanski spa largely owes its previous and current prosperity to its transport-geographical situation. The main international roads and railways (Sofia-Thessaloniki-Athens) run along the Sredna Strouma meridional valley which in itself is a natural intermontane corridor.

The easy transport-geographical

Увод

Град Сандански и његов регион су добро познати као главни климатско-балнеолошки центар од националног и међународног значаја. Развој овог бањског одмаралишта је званично регулисан и промовисан Уредом бр. 18 Савета министара, објављеном 30. марта 1981.

Обиље природних и антропогенних ресурса које поседује су да Сандански буде признат за главно бањско одмаралиште у Бугарској.

С обзиром да се налази на најјужнијем делу долине Струме, која је увећано изложена утицајима медитеранске климе, бањско одмаралиште Сандански се сматра најтоплијим местом у земљи. Близина величанствене планине Пирин га чини прилично тачку за путеве, који пролазе кроз њега, већ и као регион, надарен изузетном разноликом сликови том лепотом. Мноштво лекови тих минералних води извире у и око града које још од давнина привлаче посетиоце због лечења и рекреације.

Бањско одмаралиште Сандански се у многоме дугује својој рацији и садашњи развој својом саобраћајно-географском положају. Главни међународни путеви и железнички путеви (Софија-Солун-Атина) пролазе кроз сре дишњу долину
access to Sandaski together with the optimum natural resources have contributed to its thriving as a settlement which is evidenced by its rich and unique cultural-historic heritage. The present-day and future development of the Sandanski spa is favoured also by the priorities, set on a national and global scale, that are in compliance with the idea of sustainable development.

Tourism as a priority economic sector has long been a principal activity which left its mark on the specific features of the Sandanski spa. However, on the basis of both natural and anthropogenic resources (either available or subject to future exploration), this sector can receive a more powerful impetus.

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The Sandanski spa covers almost the whole area of the Sandanski municipality and incorporates/various/morphographic units such as river valleys and basins, foothills and mountains. Most common is the lowest relief, consisting of valleys and basins.
which are part of the large Sandansko-Petrichka basin, having been formed in the extreme south of the Strouma graben valley on Bulgarian territory. Its above-sea altitude increases from 70-80 m near the Strouma river up to 800-900 m towards Pirin where it turns into a step-like foothill. The town of Sandanski is situated at an altitude of 200-250 m. Another basic morphographic unit is the Pirin western-southwestern macroslope, which is branching off the main ridge (rising over 2 000 m) and is gradually lowering. This macroslope is heavily dissected and a lot of secondary side ridges can be distinguished within its boundaries. They are formed by the deeply incised left-side tributaries of the Strouma river: Sandanska Bistritza (along which the town spreads), Melnishka, Pirinska Bistritza, etc. The region embraces some of the northern slopes of the border-lying Slavyanka Mountain that occupy the left-side Strouma valley as well as the lowest foothills between Maleshevska Mountain and Ograzhdhen, situated in the right-side part of the valley.

The great amplitude of the highly varied relief in the Sandanski spa is favourable for the development of different forms of tourism and especially of cognitive tourism.

Climate and Climatotherapy

The striking diversity of landforms predetermines substantial values of the Sandanski spa (Pirin Mountains)
climatic differences. Thus the climate ranges from true continental-Mediterranean in the low relief forms to true mountain in the high mountain zone. In spite of this, a comparison with other regions of the country, having similar climatic features and lying at the same altitudes, show that as a whole this area is remarkable for its warmest climate and is characterized by one of the most appropriate climatic indicators for climatotherapy.

Sandanski is the sunniest town in Bulgaria (the annual sunshine duration is estimated at 2 500 hours), the hottest town (mean annual air temperature - 14°C, mean January temperature - 3.0°C and mean July temperature - 25°C) and the driest one (with the lowest relative air humidity - 66% and annual precipitation less than 550 mm). The summer in particular is recorded to be the hottest and the driest as compared to any other locality in the country. Taking into consideration these indicators, its climate tends to resemble that of the southern Black Sea coast where, however, the air humidity is much higher.

The whole western-southwestern slope of Pirin Mountain has also comparatively warmer and drier climate than the northeastern one.

The extremely short, warm and snow-free winter in the low-lying parts of the region permits to actively use the spa for climatotherapy all the year round. The insignificant temperature contrasts (long and warm
autumn, short and mild winter and early spring) prove to be very suitable for the treatment of rheumatic diseases at minimum risk of catching cold.

Most favourable is the therapeutic effect of the warm and dry climate on patients suffering from bronchial asthma and other allergic disorders of the respiratory system. It becomes obvious from health investigations and experiments that climate has either direct therapeutic or prophylactic effect. The therapeutic effect is enhanced by the unpolluted air and the aeroionization, associated with the constant mountain breeze in the Sandanska Bistritza river valley. The invigorating effect of the river and reservoirs allow to adapt easier to the oppressive high summer temperatures. If seriously-ill patients stay longer in the spa resort, they soon feel much better and therefore many of them choose to take up their residence in the region.

The Sandanski spa natural conditions for climatotherapy enormously diversify with the inclusion of the mountain zone, especially the mid-mountain one (1 000-1 600 m) where again within the Sandanska Bistritza valley there have been set up several recreational and tourist bases - Popina Luka, Turichka Cherkva, Tremoshnitza. The treatment, carried out in the valleys and basins in combination with the treatment in the medium-high mountain zone of the spa turns out to be suitable for patients, complaining
of tree and grass pollen-induced allergy. It has been established that satisfactory results have been achieved through climatotherapy even with patients who have allergic renal diseases.

Waters and Balneotherapy

The main river which receives the waters, formed within the region, is Strouma. With respect to its volume it is the second largest river in Bulgaria after the Maritza river. Its mean annual runoff is estimated at 86 cu m/s. Its regime in this section depends primarily on the regime of the Pirin tributaries. Generally it has its high waters in spring (with pronounced peak in May) due to snow melt, and summer-autumn low waters. The November-December precipitation maximum, typical for the continental-Mediterranean climate, causes a slight secondary autumn-winter maximum of water level. Some small local streams like Sandanska Bistritza, Melnishka, Pirinska Bistritza, whose length is about 30 km, are also important for the spa. Their regime changes with the altitude. At the highest altitudes their maximum water level occurs in spring and...
summer with a marked May - June peak (over 50% of the annual runoff) and the lowest waters are recorded in winter. At the low altitudes the tendency is towards a more vaguely expressed major maximum of water level in spring and one secondary in autumn and winter while the minimum water level of long duration tends to occur in summer and autumn.

Valuable natural assets are the numerous high-mountain glacial lakes that occupy cirques lying on the main and on the secondary side ridges rising above 2,000 m. They are situated in groups of which more popular are Malokamenishki, Spanopolski, Zheleznishki and Kornishki.

One balneological resource of extraordinary value, to which the town of Sandanski owes its existence, are the mineral waters. The mineral springs in and around the municipality are most common in the Strouma left-side valley and are concentrated in the town of Sandanski and in the villages of Hotovo, Levunovo, Marikostinovo which spread south of it.

The town of Sandanski's springs are located in a park zone in its northeastern part on both sides of the Sandanska Bistritza river. Well-known are the springs of the Turkish bath, the fountain of Miroto, the Polenishka bath, Pariloto, Nov sondazhen izvor (the New drilled spring). Deposits of curative mud have been found near Miroto and in морском висином. На највећим висинама максимални ниво воде имају у пролеће и лето са изра женим највишим нивоом у мајско - јунском периоду (више од 50% годишњег протока), а најнижи нивои су забележени у зиму. На мањим висинама постоји тенден ција ка мање јасно израженом главном максимуму нивоа воде у пролеће, и секундарном у јесен и зиму док се минимални дуго трајнији ниво воде појављује у лето и јесен.

Драгоцена природна богатс тва су многобројна високопланинска ледничка језера која зау зимају плато на главним и секундарним обронцима које су уздижу изнад 2000 m. Она се нала зе у групама које су познатије као Малокаменишки, Станополски, Железнички и Корнишки.

Једно балнеолошко богатство од изузетне вредности, захваљу јући којем град Сандански посто ји, су минералне воде. Извори минералних вода који се налазе у и око општине су најзаступље нији у левом делу долине Струма, а највише их има у граду Сандански и селима Хотово, Леву ново, Марикистиново која се налазе јужно од града.

Извори града Сандански се налазе у зони парка у његовом североисточном делу са обе стране реке Санданска Бистрица. Најпознатији извори су Турско купатило, фонтана Мирото, купатило Поленишка, Парилото,
Marikostinovo. With regard to their chemical composition the mineral waters can be defined as hydrocarbonate-sulphate-sodium, silicon and fluoric. Their total discharge is about 65 l/s (for the town of Sandanski only this figure is 25 l/s). Their temperature varies from 33 C to 86 C. They have poor mineral content - 0.78-1.02 g/l and that is why diseases can be treated both by drinking the water and by bathing.

The Sandanski spa mineral waters can cure a great number of diseases such as disorders in the locomotor apparatus, in the peripheral nervous system and digestive system, in the metabolism, dermal allergies, post-fracture effects, diseases of the respiratory tract, gynaecological ailments, etc. The Sandanski spa mineral waters utilization dates from the remotest antiquity.

Organized sanatorium-resort treatment in the spa started in the early 1960s. On the basis of the available mineral waters and curative mud,
modern balneohospitals, solaria and mud-cure establishments have been built and therapeutic procedures are being further diversified and improved.

Landscape Diversity and Recreation

The Sandanski spa natural resources attract not only patients who need medical treatment but also visitors who would like to make a complete recovery during their long-term holidays or week-end recreation.

Highly attractive is the Sandanski public park with an area of 40 ha and luxuriant vegetation, represented by more than 200 Mediterranean species, which can be seen nowhere else in Bulgaria. There are also water slides, water wheels and boats, swimming pools, sites for entertainments and many other facilities.

Splendid opportunities for recreation activities are provided in the mid-mountain and high-mountain forest, alpine-meadow and lacustrine landscapes of the Pirin Mountain. These lands are included in the Pirin park which is on the UNESCO List for Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. 12 440 ha (of which 505 are under forests) of its area are within the Sandanski municipality boundaries.
The great relief amplitudes and the diverse natural environmental conditions, produced by the changes in climate and soils with the altitude, have resulted in striking diversity of plant cover. Amidst the oak, beech and hornbeam woods, common for the lower mountain zones, and spruce, pine-trees and fir-trees widespread at higher altitudes, there can be seen a number of typical for this southern region species such as white fir, Ostrya carpinifolia Scop., sycamore, Juniperus oxycedrus L. and many others, especially grass species. Most of them are relic and endemic forms and are listed in Bulgaria's Red Book.

The animal kingdom is extremely varied, too. Alongside with widely distributed species, some heat-loving representatives, particularly insects, are to be found which are confined only to this region. As the birds and reptiles are concerned, the region is known for its greatest diversity throughout the country.

At the highest altitudes, amidst the impenetrable dwarf pine associations and alpine meadows and pastures, above the forest upper level, are dispersed dozens of lakes, feeding the local streams' primary tributaries some of which have picturesque waterfalls. The most popular is Popinolashki waterfall (11 m) in the Popina Luka countryside, designated as protected, while the Skoko waterfall near the village of Kashina, northeast of Melnik, is the highest one (20 m).
Innumerable are the natural landscapes with their own specificity which are an attractive tourist objective. Mention should be made of the exotic character of Melnishki pyramids which the Melnishka river tributaries have sculptured in the loose sandstones up to 100 m height as well as of the exotic character of Slavyanka where over 40 Bulgarian and Balkan endemic forms are to be found. The biosphere reserve "Aliboutush" (1 630 ha) gives protection to the relic form and Balkan endemic Pinus heldreichii which is of most extensive occurrence here.

The recreational opportunities in the region are inexhaustible. Sandanski and Melnik are the main starting points for exciting routes, leading to mountain chalets, peaks, lakes, waterfalls, etc. In the medium-high and high mountain zones such starting points are the "Yane Sandanski", "Kamenitza" and "Pirin" chalets and for Slavyanka - the villages of Petrovo and Golešhevo.

Antropogenic Resources
Cultural and Historic Heritage

Besides its varied natural scenery the Sandanski spa is famous for its important historical events. The development of the settlement is closely associated with...
the mineral springs which began to be used by the first settlers on our lands, the Thracians, as early as centuries B.C. It becomes clear from the archaeological investigations that its first name was Medius which corresponds to its central location, having substantially contributed to its prosperity.

The findings, consisting of implements of labour, vessels of every-day use and architectural ornaments, are tokens indicating the urban type of the settlement.

During the Roman and Byzantine domination the town was first named Dezudava and later on - Germanea. It was exactly at that time when it reached a flourishing state. From the remains of buildings, tombstones with inscriptions, colonades, fortress walls and other cultural monuments it can be judged about its considerable expansion and rapid development. It was provided with water-supply and sewerage system beneath the streets and was considered to be one of the medium-sized towns in the country and one of the biggest ones in the Sredna Strouma valley. The warm mineral springs were piped for the needs of public baths. The remains of an ancient Roman bath with marble floor and other ornaments in the architectural lay-out suggest that the bath was a centre of public contacts
and cultural events. The town seems to have been a significant economic centre.

The ancient town marked an exceptionally brilliant period in its economic and cultural development during the late Roman and the early Byzantine epochs - from the mid-4th to the end of the 6th century which is evidenced by the uncovered remains of old Christian basilicas and other buildings in its central part. Extremely valuable are the well-preserved vast marble floors of unique nature (80 sq.m) uncovered during the archaeological excavations. They are assumed to be one of the best preserved basilicas not only on a national scale and therefore they attract the attention of highly-professional West-European specialists, mostly archaeologists.

In the Middle Ages and during the National Revival Period the town continued to develop as a bath centre, known by the name of St. Vrach - a name associated with the two brothers Kozma and Damyan who were folk healers. With the growing role of Christianity a lot of churches were built near the springs and eminent healers and clergymen were canonized to be saints. The jewellery and coins, found in the ruins around them which date from the reign of Tzar Ivan Asen, also prove that the town's mineral springs were still very important.

Highly appreciated were the mineral springs during the Ottoman rule, too. Well preserved Turkish значения економски центар. Аднечки град је обележио изузетно брилијантан период у свом економском и културном развоју током касне римске и ране византијске епохе – од средине IV до краја VI века што сведоче откривени остаци старих хришћанских цркава и осталих грађевина у свом централном делу. Од изузетне вредности су очувани простране мермерни подови јединствене природе (80 м²) који су откривени током археолошких ископавања. Они се сматрају најочуванијим црквама не само на националном нивоу и због тога привлаче пажњу високо-стручних западноевропских стручњака, највише археолога.

У Средњем веку и током периода националног препорода град је наставио да се развија као бањски центар, познат под именом Св. Врач – именом које се везује за два брата Козму и Дамјана који су били народни исцелитељи. Како је улога хришћанства расла многе цркве су грађене близу извора, а угледни исцелитељи и свештеници су проглашавани свешницама. Накит и ковани новац, пронађен у рушевинама из периода Цара Ивана Асена, такође потврђују да су градски извори минералне воде и даље били од великог значаја.

Извори минералне воде су били високо цењени и за време отоманске владавине. Опстала су добро очувана турска купатила која је становиште до скоро
baths have remained which were used by the population until recently.

Of great value is the public archaeological museum where are kept remains of an episcopal basilica and exquisite in shape and colors mosaics. On the second floor are displayed various exhibits from all epochs the town has passed through in its development.

Melnik, the smallest town in Bulgaria (267 people in 1997) is a real cultural monument. It is designated as a cultural and historical reserve and a museum town and has got the status of a unique settlement of international importance for economic tourism. More than 200 residential, public and religious buildings are completely or partially preserved which give an idea about the town-planning in the Middle Ages and during the National Revival Period and about the specific architectural style of the houses that can be seen only in Melnik. Such are the Bolyarska, Kordopoulova, Mencheva, Yankova, Kourteva, Kehaiova, Bayovska houses, etc.

The monasteries, built throughout the country as well as in the Sandanski spa, are another impressive cultural and historical monuments. Most famous is the Rozhen monastery to the northeast of Melnik and the ancient monastery church with its delicate wood-carving of the iconostasis. Many churches, some of which are of national importance, are regarded as monuments of culture, too, e.g. "St. Antonii" church (11th

63
century) in Melnik, the cemetery church "St. St. Bezsrebreniti Kozma i Damyan" in Sandanski, etc.

The monuments, denoting the cultural and historical development of Sandanski and its surroundings are numberless but most of them are in danger of being destroyed by modern construction which holds especially for the remains from the times of the ancient civilizations.

Tourist Establishments and Facilities

The town of Sandanski which was thus named in 1949 after the distinguished revolutionary, taking part in the Macedonian liberation movement, has 30 000 residents and the population of the whole municipality is 45 000 people distributed over an area of 1010 sq. km. Today it falls under the category of medium-sized Bulgarian towns although every year it accommodates twice as many visitors as its local population whose purpose of visit is different (recreation, medical treatment, business activities, etc.). They can rely on various accommodation, public catering and health establishments, places of entertainment, etc.

The construction of modern balneotherapy facilities started in 1961 when in the northern corner of the "St. Vrach" public park an old building was converted into a sanatorium with 70 beds. Later on two other sanatorial-resort complexes век), гробљанска црква „Св. Безсребреници Козма и Дамјан“ у Санданском, итд.

Споменици, који указују на културни и историјски развој Санданског и његовог окружења су небројени, али многима од њих прети опасност од уништења савременом градњом, што је посебно тачно за остатке из времена античке цивилизације.

Град Сандански који је тако назван 1949. по уваженом револуционару, који је учество вао у Македонском ослободи лачком покрету, има 30 000 ста новника, а популација целе општине је 45.000 људи који живе на територији од 1.010км². Дана спада у категорију градова средње величине у Бугарској, иако годишње угости дупло више туриста него што има становника, чији се разлози посете разликују (рекреативни, медицинско лечење третман, пословни, итд.). Они имају на располагању различите смештаје, јавну услугу и здравствене установе, места за забаву, итд.

Изградња модерних грађевин на за балнеотерапију је почела 1961. када је у северном углу јавног парка „Св. Врач“ стара зграда преобрађена у санатори јум са 70 кревета. Касније су изграђена још два санатори јумска комплекса у истом парку са укупно 480 кревета.
were built in the same park with a total of 480 beds. One of them is specialised for the treatment of respiratory and non-TBC pulmonary diseases and can accommodate 90 adults and 90 children. A children sanatorium with 300 beds is being built at the moment. The sanatorium-resort complexes have therapeutic-diagnostic departments, surgeries, labo-ratories, centres for electric-and-light therapy and inhalations, paraffin therapy, pools with equipment for under-water physical exercises and remedial massage, solaria, etc.

In addition, a new resort polyclinic was set up to which belongs a boarding house offering 850 beds in private lodgings. There is a climatherapy school providing 160 beds for children suffering from rheumatism.

Towards the end of 1983 and at the beginning of 1984 the "Sandanski" balneohotel (bearing the same name as the town itself) was open for visitors which is the biggest one not only in the region but all over the country. Designed by a Bulgarian architect and built by the Austrian firm "Universale", it stands right at the public park entrance. Its floor space is 5840 sq.m and the adjacent area belonging to it is 8170 sq.m. It is classed under the category of 4-star hotels. The hotel has 7 floors, offering 600 beds in 285 rooms (22.5 sq.m each), a large luxury suite (80 sq.m) and 8 small ones (45 sq.m). The ground floor and the mezzanine are occupied by 2 restaurants with


eyedan od njih je specijalizovan za lečenje respiratornih i neturberkulozih njih plućnih oboljenja i može da primi 90 odraslih i 90 dece. U ovom trenutku se gradi sana torijum za dece sa 300 kreveta. Sanatorijumski kompleks ima odjele za terapiju i dijagnostiku, operacione sale, laboratorije, centri za elektro i svetlosnu terapiju i inhalaciju, para finsku terapiju, bazene sa opremom za podvodne fizičke vježbe i koraktivnu masazu, solarijum, itd.

Osim toga, osnovana je nova poliklinika u sklopu kojoj se nalazi pansion koji ima u ponudi 850 kreveta u namenite niv sobama. Postoji i klimagoterapijska škola koja obезbeđuje 160 kreveta za dece koja pate od reumatizma.

Krajem 1983. i početkom 1984. balneohotel "Sandanski" (koji nosi isto ime kao i grad) je otvoren za posetioce i najvećim je ne samo u regionu него i u citavoj zemlji. Projektovao ga je bugarski arhitekt a sagrađena austrijska firma "Universale", nalazi se na самом ulazu u javni park. Njegova spratna površina iznosi 5.840m², a susjedni prostor koji mu pripada je 8.170 m². Pripada klasi hotelsa sa 4 zvездице. Hotel ima 7 spratova, u ponudi ima 600 kreveta u 285 soba (svaka ima 22.5 m²), jedan veliki luksuzni apartman (80m2) i 8 maњih (45m²). U

приземљу и на међуспрату се
120 and 350 seats respectively, a pastry shop with 212 seats, a bar and a night club, a conference hall with 150 seats, a library, 2 shops, a chemist's, etc. The medical centre, which is a separate unit, consists of consulting rooms equipped with precise diagnostic technique or with facilities for different therapeutic procedures, in-door and out-door swimming pools that are linked with each other, saunas, solaria, etc. The hotel is provided with sports facilities for active sports and recreation and with a well run parking lot and motor service.

Another impressive hotel complex is that of "St. Vrach", built on a moderately high foothill step northeast of Sandanski. Originally it was designed to be a governmental balneosanatorium. From 1985 to 1989 it functioned as a governmental residence and in January 1990 it became a hotel complex composed of two parts and named "Golyama" and "Malka" residence or hotel "St. Vrach" and hotel "Kartalovetz" respectively with a total of 76 beds. The hotel complex consists of one presidential suite (650 sq.m), 2 vice-presidential ones (350 sq.m), 11 ordinary suites, 9 double rooms and 8 three-bed rooms.

It has 2 restaurants, a bar and night club, a billiard room and a modern medical centre implementing a number of rehabilitation and prophylactic programs. The park covers 72 ha and is remarkable not only for its surprisingly unpolluted natural, recreational and cultural-historic values of the Sandanski spa (Pirin Mountains)
environment but also for its exceptional botanical diversity, dominated mainly by southern species which are rare for our conditions. There is an artificial lake and a spacious parking lot. The "St. Vrach" is a 5-star hotel complex and is on the list of the international travel agencies.

Plenty of small hotels in the town and its region are worth mentioning, too. Within the town you can see "Spartak" which is an old 3-star hotel (built in 1973) with 168 beds distributed in 77 rooms and 7 suites and "Mramor" (built in 1993), used as a rest house for pupils from all over the country and abroad, with 70 beds and a well equipped kitchen. In the town of Melnik is the "Melnik" hotel with 43 beds which together with 9 private hotels with a total of 229 beds give accommodation to the visitors. There is a small hotel in the village of Marikostinovo where a balneohospital and a mud-cure establishment function all the year round.

In the town of Sandanski and its region the number of beds in private lodging is twice as large as that in the hotels, motels, folk houses (1150) and sanatoria (680) put together.

Considerable role for the accommodation of visitors have the camping sites near the town with 93 beds and the chalets and camps with 610 beds, distributed mainly in the "Popina Luka" countryside (1 230 m above the sea level) where is the town of Sandanski's villa zone with more medical center which provides a large number of rehabilitation and prophylactic programs. The Park covers 72 hectares and is a unique nature reserve dominated by southern species which are rare for our conditions. There is an artificial lake and a spacious parking lot. The "St. Vrach" is a 5-star hotel complex and is on the list of the international travel agencies.
than 200 second homes and in the "Tourichka Cherkva" (1 540 m) where a resort complex has been built with 300 beds.

An integral part of the tourist facilities are the catering establishments in Sandanski and its surroundings, consisting of: about 60 restaurants and taverns with 3,000 seats, 200 cafes, bars and pastry shops with 4,200 seats, 13 snack-bars and pizza huts with 300 seats, etc. Totally, the number of catering establishments is over 340 and the seats in them are 9,000.

Obviously, the Sandanski spa is provided with pretty good facilities and establishments but the specialists think they are inadequate to guarantee sufficient use of the climatic, balneological and tourist resources.

Offers and Utilization of tourist Product in the Sandinski Spa

The tourist product is defined as a combination of conditions, services and commodities necessary to meet certain health and recreation needs.

The tourist product in the Sandanski spa can be classed as a combination of conditions, services and commodities necessary to meet certain health and recreation needs.

Понуда и искоришћавање туристичких потенцијала у бањи Сандански

Туристичка понуда је дефинирана као комбинација услова, услуга и робе широке потрошње неопходних за задовољање одређених здравствених и рекреативних потреба.
according to the demands it satisfies into: balneological, climatotherapeutic, recreational, cognitive, sport, congress tourism, business trips, etc. Depending on the nature and specific features of each tourist product, relevant medical, rehabilitation, prophylactic or entertainment programs are proposed.

Most successful in meeting a wide range of demands is the "Sandanski" hotel which is due to its modern technical equipment and high qualification of its personnel, numbering 330 people. Regarding its capacity it is unrivalled in the country particularly as a balneological centre for treatment of respiratory tract allergies and other non-specific pulmonary diseases. With its tourist product it has established itself on many of the traditional European markets. Its balneological department (which occupies a separate building) offers different methods of treatment and prophylaxis - hydrotherapy, electric therapy, ultrasound therapy, paraffin therapy, kinesitherapy, reflexotherapy, physiotherapy as well as various programs for slimming, withdrawal from smoking, longevity, fitness and antistress programs, the stomatological program "Svezhest", etc.

The second balneological centre is the sanatorium complex, located in the park area of the town of Sandanski, in which the "Miroto" balneo-hospital functions in spring, summer and autumn. It offers the traditional hydro- and fango-therapy in Sandanski se може класифицио вати, према захтевима које испу њава, на: балнеолошке, климато терапеутске, рекреативне, когни тивне, спортске, конгресни тури зам, пословна путовања, итд. Зависно од природе и специјал них одлика сваке од туристичких понуда, предлажу се релеван тни медицински, рехабилитацији они, профилактички или забав ни програми. Најуспешнији у испуњавању великог броја захтева је хотел „Сандански“ захваљујући својој модерној техничкој опреми и висококвалификованом особљу, од укупно 330 људи. Што се тиче његовог капацитета, он је неприкосновен у земљи нарочито као балнеолошки центар за лечање алерија дисајних путева и осталих атипичних плућних болести. Са својом туристичком понудом он је постао реномиран на многим традиционалним европским тржиштима. Његово балнеолошко одељење (које се налази у засебној згради) нуди различите методе лечања и профилаксе - хидротерапију, електро-терапију, ултразвучну терапију, парафинску терапију, кинетичку терапију, рефлексну терапију, физиотерапију као и различите програме за мршавље ње, одвикање од пушења, дуго вечност, фитнес и антистрес про граме, стоматолошки програм „Свежест“, итд.

Други балнеолошки центар је
combination with paraffin therapy, remedial gymnastics, individual or group inhalations, etc.

The third centre is the sanatorial-resort complex Marikostinovo where a new balneo-hospital is in operation, and a mud-cure hospital which functions on the basis of a mud deposit with a series of mineral springs spouting out. Various procedures take place here mainly for the treatment of the locomotor apparatus, of the digestive, peripheral nervous and vascular system, of injuries and other ailments.

With respect to the proposed tourist product for climatotherapy and recreation the resort as a whole has unlimited capacities. Open-air pools and solaria are used and routes along "health-trails" with gradual inclusion of higher altitudes and picnics at 2,000 m are organized.

The sport tourism in the spa is also well developed owing to the available facilities for swimming, rowing, tennis, football, basketball, volley-ball, bowling-alley, etc., and the favourable natural conditions promote mountaineering, skiing, hunting, fishing, etc.

Taking into account the abundant natural and anthropogenic resources of the region it can be concluded that the proposed tourist product for cognitive and hobby tourism is particularly diverse.

Complete information about the opportunities for recreation, medical treatment, rehabilitation, attractions, folk and other cultural events is
provided by the Tourist Information Centre in the town of Sandanski. At the same time the "Interhotel-Sandanski" is responsible for the organization of excursions by comfortable buses and vans and can give you detailed information about the routes.

As the possibilities for congress tourism and business trips are concerned, Sandanski has gained in importance in recent years because of the comfort, the specialized facilities and excellent organization one can find in the hotel complexes "Sandanski" and "St. Vrach".

In 1997 the "Sandanski" hotel only received 38,046 visitors. Of them 7,721 were foreigners who stayed for 4 or 5 days (i.e. the number of nights spent there is estimated at 35,260) and 30,325 Bulgarians who stayed for 2 or 3 days (i.e. 74,458 nights). It is interesting to note that the foreign tourists usually come from Greece, Germany, Macedonia, Russia, the Scandinavian countries, Italy, France, Israel, etc., on a package tour while the Bulgarian visitors come on an individual basis.

In 1996 about 82,000 tourists visited the town of Sandanski and its region and in 1977 they were 55,000. The greatest number is registered in the summer months which can be explained with the priority of climatotherapy and balneotherapy.

In 1996 there were occupied 72.63% of all beds on the average and in 1997 this figure was 62.64% (hotels - 81.02%, sanatoria - 70.88% and private lodgings - 42.64%).
Irrespective of a certain decline in the number of visitors recorded in 1977 in the Sandanski spa, resulting mainly from their lower incomes and from price rising, it is believed that with the economic stabilization this number will grow which in turn will lead to more efficient utilization of the available facilities. The tourist flow from abroad is also supposed to increase. In order to achieve this goal certain measures are being taken to accentuate the advertising activities.

док бугарски посетиоци долазе у сопственој организацији. У 1996. години око 82.000 туриста је посетило град Сандански и његов регион, а у 1977. их је било 55.000. Највећи број је забележен у летњим месецима што се може објаснити важношћу климатотерапије и балнеотерапије.

У 1996. године је било заузето 72,63% свих кревета у просеку, а у 1997. години овај број је износио 62,64% (хотели – 81,02%, санаторијуми – 70,88% и приватни смештај – 42,64%). Без обзира на одређени пад у броју посетилаца који је забележен 1977. у бањи Сандански, који је углавном резултат малих прилива и скока цена, верује се да ће уз економску стабилизацију овај број порasti што ће са своје стране водити ка ефикаснијој експлоатацији располажењих капацитета. Очекује се и пораст броја туриста из иностранства. Како би се постигао овај циљ предузимају се одредјене мере које у први план стављају рекламне активности.
References
Литература