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PROMOTING HERITAGE - AND CULTURE - BASED EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM IN THE BLACK SEA BASIN

Project No BSB-1145



OVERVIEW OF THE PILOT INVENTORIES

for Experiential Tourism in Greece

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Overview of the Pilot Inventories for Experiential Tourism in Greece

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this report is to present ten representative popular authentic cultural activities and events that take place in the two Greek Black Sea Basin Regions (for now on BSB-GR), i.e. the Region of Central Macedonia and the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, and were selected as case studies for the “pilot inventories of heritage and culture activities and events in the BSB” developed within the PRO EXTOUR research program. The objective of the research, on which this report is based, was to identify and document general information, basic characteristics as well as key and specific features of the selected events and their activities. Moreover, it was crucial to understand the extent and the importance of experiential activities occurring within these events. This report provides a synthesis as well as a comparative analysis of the features of the ten case studies.

The identification of the cultural events in the BSB-GR was based on the five (5) main categories as prescribed by the PRO EXTOUR research proposal, namely Traditions and celebrations, Historic sites and re-enactments, Festivals, Cultural Events and Natural heritage. The selection was based on a set of criteria. Initially, emphasis was given to the spatial distribution of the selected events so that the two regions would be equally represented. Other considerations were the uniqueness of each event, their outreach and importance as well as their differentiation in terms of content. An attempt was also made to select events that include or could possibly include experiential activities. Another important factor was whether it was feasible to communicate with the organizers of the events as some of them are organized by small local associations and it was not easy to find their contact information.

1. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CULTURAL EVENT INDUSTRY IN GREECE

Greece has a long tradition in tourism and hospitality mainly due to its history and ancient civilisation. Major tourism development in Greece started in the mid-1970s, with a dramatic increase of tourism flows in the late 1970s and 1980s. To this day, tourism is one of the most important sectors of the Greek economy and a key element of the country’s economic activity and growth, contributing significantly to the country’s GDP (Buhalis, 2001; Kouri, 2012; Pîrjol et al., 2018; OECD, 2020).

Greece has relied heavily on mass tourism models [especially the sea, sand, sun, (3S) model] since its adoption in the 1970s, and to a certain degree on its history, creating a “sun-sea-antiquities” tourism product. From the 1980s the unsustainable character of mass tourism manifested and Greece has been trying for the past, at least 20 years, to attract a more sustainable, more alternative, less invasive type of tourism demand by investing and promoting its rich environmental resources, its cultural identity, and a variety of experiences. However, Greece is still perceived as a summer sea-and-sun destination (for tourists and residents) and it is believed that culture has not yet developed into a primary tourism motivator (Buhalis, 2001; Kouri, 2012; Agaliotou et al., 2019).



The cultural sector, by means of important cultural institutions, industries, infrastructure and major organized events mainly international, is characterized by a concentration in the two largest cities of Greece, Athens and Thessaloniki (Konsola & Karachalis, 2010; Georgoula & Terkenli, 2019). However, in the early 1980s the Greek approach to cultural decentralisation changed, with the transfer of funding and operational responsibilities for cultural development to the local government. Since then, local authorities (often with the financial support of the State), have undertaken an active role by creating and operating cultural institutions and facilities, implementing cultural programmes and supporting their festivals (Konsola & Karachalis, 2010; Trivella, 2019).

The Ministry of Tourism is responsible for tourism policy making and development in Greece. It introduces legislation on tourism, agrees the strategic marketing plan, stimulates and supports investment and works to improve the quality and competitiveness of Greek tourism by preparing and implementing short-term and long-term programs. The Ministry operates a network of 14 Regional Tourism Offices and co-operates closely with other interested ministries and tourism bodies. The implementation of the Marketing Strategy is carried out by the Greek National Tourism Organisation (GNTO), which operates a network of 16 offices overseas. These organisations are also responsible for coordinating the involvement of the public and private sectors in all tourism activities (Buhalis, 2001; Kouri, 2012; OECD, 2020; <https://mintour.gov.gr/>). Regions and municipalities plan and implement programmes and activities for tourism development and promotion. All promotional activities require the approval of the GNTO, to ensure that these campaigns align with the national strategy for tourism promotion (OECD, 2020).

Cultural heritage is protected by the Greek State, as it represents a public good and is a significant carrier of memory and identity. Moreover, tangible and intangible heritage represents a major tourism resource, which in turn provides justification and motivation for heritage conservation and promotion. The task of formulating and implementing cultural policy at the national level lies with the Ministry of Culture and Sports, which is responsible to protect and promote cultural heritage through legislative and institutional interventions, to strengthen and protect artistic and intellectual creations and to provide support for contemporary culture. Even though heritage administration is centralized, geographical decentralization is attained via regional ministerial departments, the Ephorates, which are responsible for researching, managing, and promoting heritage resources in their respective jurisdictions. Private cultural foundations have a significant role in the cultural life of the country with the establishment of cultural institutions, mainly museums, and the provision of support for the organisation of prestigious events. Other important actors in the formulation of cultural policy in Greece, especially at the local level, are the voluntary associations covering various fields of cultural activity. The Ministry, due to financial shortages, increasingly seeks partnerships with local authorities, NGOs, businesses, private and public institutions, and volunteer groups (Konsola & Karachalis, 2010; Kouri, 2012; <https://www.culture.gov.gr>).



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2. METHODS USED FOR GATHERING INFORMATION

The first step of the research included a literature review regarding cultural event practices in Greece as well as the key players in the event industry, such as local and regional authorities, professionals, amateurs, associations and agencies. This brief description was based on scientific articles.

After this procedure, an attempt was made to list as many as possible cultural events and activities that take place in the BSB-GR. As a result, 32 cultural events and activities were documented. Some of these take place in various settlements in BSB-GR and in some cases they even have different names even though they are basically the same. These thirty two (32) cultural events and activities were categorized in the five (5) main categories, namely Traditions and celebrations, Historic sites and re-enactments, Festivals, Cultural Events and Natural heritage. Only ten (10) of them were finally selected based on their location (dispersion throughout the BSB-GR and equal representation of the two regions, that is 5 in each one), uniqueness, outreach, importance and differentiation in terms of content/character.

For each of these ten (10) events a thorough research was conducted regarding contacts of the organizers, time-schedule and basic information such as their history, key activities, participants, partners/supporter, sponsors, accessibility and ways/methods of communication and promotion. Once the contact details of all the organizers were recorded, emails were sent to inform them about the PRO EXTOUR project and to invite them to participate. Meanwhile a semi-structured questionnaire was developed as a guide for the interviews or in order for the organizers to fill out. The semi-structured method was selected because the open-ended questions would allow the respondents to express their opinions in their own terms and from their own point of view, which would accommodate a large range of different responses. These varied perspectives could help to the understanding of the meaning individuals ascribe to cultural events practices and the relevant problems and also could contribute to explore these practices in the BSB-GR (Kvale, 1996; Creswell, 2009).

After the initial communication via email, all the organizers were contacted via telephone to establish whether they were interested in participating in the research project and also to determine the method of participation. Most of the organizers agreed to fill out the questionnaire while two of them preferred a telephone interview. Regardless of the preferred way the semi-structured questionnaire/guide was sent to all of them. A second telephone communication was made, when necessary, to clarify some answers or ask for more information. The two telephone interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Based on the transcriptions and the notes that were taken to capture important facts of the respondents' answers, the two relevant questionnaires were filled out. All the questionnaires were translated in English and were supplemented, if needed, with necessary information that were previously documented about the events.

During this process, the research team had frequent meetings regarding the progress and the data that were being collected.





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3. THEMATIC AREAS: MAIN CATEGORIES OF ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

The categorization of the events was based as mentioned before on five (50 main thematic areas/categories (which are the same for all the partners), namely:

- Traditions and celebrations
- Historic sites and re-enactments
- Festivals,
- Cultural Events, and
- Natural heritage.

A specific approach was followed for the categorization of the different events in these five (5) thematic areas. Specifically, in the category “Traditions and celebrations” the events that were included are related to heritage. Thus the custom of Anastenaria and the Silk Festivity were selected. The custom of Anastenaria, which is a barefoot fire-walking ritual, is a special and distinct part of the Greek tradition and one of the most characteristic parts of our cultural heritage, brought by the refugees of Eastern Rumelia of Thrace (Eastern Roman Thrace). The custom takes place in Lagadas (a village about half an hour outside Thessaloniki) in the Region of Central Macedonia. It revives on January 17, 18 and 20 (the winter Anastenaria, in honor of the celebrating Saints), on July 27 (in honor of Saint Panteleimon) and on May 21-22-23, on the day of the feast of Saint Constantine and Saint Helen which is the most widespread, that is the culmination of the custom. The Silk Festivity takes place in the city of Soufli, in the Regional unit of Evros which is part of the Region of East Macedonia and Thrace, in summer (June, July or September). It is organized in order to honor the local silkworm rearing tradition of the wider area and at the same time is an attempt to revive this particular sector while promoting the silk products.

The category “Historic sites and re-enactments” encompasses events that take place in historic or officially protected settlements and constitute re-enactments of a past event/incident. For this category the custom of Janissaries and Boules was selected as it combines both characteristics. The custom takes place in the Heroic City of Naoussa, in the Regional Unit of Imathia which is part of the Region of Central Macedonia, during the period of carnival. It is, essentially, a dance event in honor of the heroic struggles of Naoussa against the Ottomans. The second selected event in this category is the custom of the Camel and the Wedding of Manio. The custom takes place in Galatista, which is a traditional village located in the Regional Unit of Chalkidiki in the Region of Central Macedonia, on the 5th, 6th and 7th of January. The custom has its roots in the years of Ottoman rule and is revived in remembrance of the reunion and the marriage of a couple.

For the category of “Festivals” two important art/cultural events were selected. The first is the Olympus Festival that takes place in the Regional Unit of Pieria, located in the southwest part of the Region of Central Macedonia, every summer in July and August. Olympus Festival has been one of the leading cultural organizations for the Performing Arts in Greece, with international perspective. The second is the Philippi Festival that takes place in the city of Kavala, the capital of the Regional Unit of Kavala in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, in July and August. Philippi Festival is an important institution, the second major



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festival in Greece after the Epidaurus Festival. It hosts performances and also has its own productions involving theater, music, modern dance and other performances.

The category of “Cultural events” is more general and it includes Xanthi’s Old Town Festival and Dramoinognosia. Xanthi’s Old Town Festival takes place in the historical traditional settlement of the Old Town of Xanthi, Xanthi is the capital of the homonymous Regional Unit in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, every year in late August - early September. It is a celebration with concerts, performances and exhibitions that promotes the city’s special characteristics and the local rich historical and cultural heritage. Dramoinognosia is a wine celebration that takes place throughout the Regional Unit of Drama, Drama is the capital of the Regional Unit of Drama which is part of the East Macedonia and Thrace Region, in May and usually lasts for 1 week. The event is based on both historical and traditional elements as well as modern conditions. It is a celebration through wine, local flavors, history and culture.

The category of “Natural heritage” includes events that take place in natural protected areas and are related to the protection of biodiversity, of the areas, etc. The first one, EuroBirdwatch in Lake Kerkini takes place in the Eastern embankment of Lake Kerkini, which is located in the Regional Unit of Serres in the west part of the Region of Central Macedonia, on the first Sunday of October. It is an annual bird watching event organized throughout Europe that aims to protect birdlife and its habitats. The second event is World Forestry Day that takes place in Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli Forest National Park, in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, on 21st of March. World Forestry Day is celebrated around the world on 21st March each year. The Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli Forest National Park is one of the most important protected areas at national, European and international scale and the event aims to raise awareness about the protection of the important natural environment of the area.

Table 1: List of selected cultural events/activities

	Name	Region	Implementation period	Thematic area - event category
1	Anastenaria	Region of Central Macedonia	January 17, 18 & 20, July 27 and May 21, 22 and 23	Traditions and celebrations
2	Silk Festivity	Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace	June, July or September	Traditions and celebrations
3	Custom of Janissaries and Boules	Region of Central Macedonia	February	Historic sites and re-enactments
4	Custom of the Camel and the Wedding of Manio	Region of Central Macedonia	January 5, 6 and 7	Historic sites and re-enactments



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5	Olympus Festival	Region of Central Macedonia	July - August	Festivals
6	Philippi Festival	Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace	July - August	Festivals
7	Xanthi's Old Town Festival	Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace	Late August - early September	Cultural events
8	Dramoinognosia (Drama's Wine Celebration)	Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace	May	Cultural events
9	EuroBirdwatch in Lake Kerkini	Region of Central Macedonia	First Sunday of October	Natural heritage
10	World Forestry Day in Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli Forest National Park	Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace	March 21	Natural heritage

4. DESCRIPTION AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

The questionnaire, that was created, included three categories of key questions, namely:

I. General information for the event / activities

1. Name of the event
2. Category
3. Location and venues of the event / activities
4. When does the event take place / Duration
5. Organizers and contact details

II. Description and key features of the event and / or activities

6. Background information of the event / activities
7. Main message to audience
8. Key activities

Are experiential / interactive activities included?

If yes, which ones?

If not, do you think some of them could be included, can you give an example?

9. Technological, organizational, social, artistic innovations (e.g. use of environmentally friendly materials and / or "green" technologies, methods of measuring and controlling processes and / or quality of services provided, digital methods of communication and sales, digital transmission systems, experimental -alternative artistic approaches and actions, etc.)



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10. What are the key features / services that make the event and / or activities attractive to the public?
 11. Key partners and supporters / sponsors
 12. Participants of the event / activities: local community and customer segments
 13. Ways of communicating with the public / customers, communication channels, social media
- III. Specific elements / features
14. Description of the organization and management model, if any, of the event / activities
 15. Accessibility by different means of transportation to the event and its venues (e.g. transport and road connections, sidewalks, bike paths, parking lots, access to different social / age groups, people with disabilities)
 16. Associations and connections with other events and activities in the Black Sea region (Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Turkey)

As already mentioned, the selected events/activities take place across BSB-GR. In more detail about the locations/venues, EuroBirdwatch takes place in the Eastern embankment of Lake Kerkini, which is located in the Regional Unit of Serres in the west part of the Region of Central Macedonia. Lake Kerkini is one of the 10 Wetlands of International Importance in Greece (Ramsar Wetlands). It is also one of the 196 Important Bird Areas of Greece and a Special Protection Area. The lake was created in 1932 with the construction of a dam on the Strymonas River near the village of Lithotopos and the construction of embankments to the east and west. World Forestry Day is taking place in the Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli Forest National Park Information Center. The Center is located in Dadia, about 800 meters from the main square of the village, at the heart of the protected area. The Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli Forest National Park is, also, one of the most important protected areas at national, European and international scale. It is one of the first areas in Greece to be declared as protected. The National Park is located in the Peripheral Unit of Evros, in the Region of East Macedonia and Thrace.

Olympus Festival takes place in the Regional Unit of Pieria, located in the southwest part of the Region of Central Macedonia. The various events and activities take place in several sites, specifically in important archeological sites, such as: the Ancient Theatre of Philippi (dating from the mid-4th B.C. is one of the earliest stone open air theatres in Greece) and the Roman Odeion (Conservatory) in the archeological park of Dion, the Platamon Byzantine Castle, the Ancient Livithra, the Ancient Pydna, the Byzantine Church Panagia Kondariotissa in the northwest of Dion, and the Byzantine archeological site in Louloudies Kitrous. Also, several events and activities take place in modern premises in the area, such as: the Mediterranean Mosaic Center in Dion, the Park Theater of Katerini, the Municipal Theater of Kolindros, the Open Theater of Palios Panteleimonas, the Open Theater of Litochoro Park, the Museum of Natural History in Olympus National Park, and the Museum Warehouse of Makrigialos next to Ancient Pydna. Philippi Festival also takes place in different locations in and around the city of Kavala, in the southwest part of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, namely: the Ancient Theatre of Philippi, the Fortress of Kavala, the Courtyard of the 7th Primary School of Kavala-Faros, the Cray Plot, the Carnagio, the Mohammed Ali Family Gardens (one of the most brilliant surviving examples of Ottoman architecture of the late 18th c. in Greece that currently

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operates as a museum), the Imaret (a 19th century Ottoman building complex offered by Mohammed Ali that currently operates as a monument-hotel), the Halil Bey Mosque (commonly known as the “Old Music”) and the open-air cinema Cinema “Zefiros”.

Silk Festivity takes place in Soufli, a town in the Regional Unit of Evros with a long history in silk production and industry. The various activities take place in different venues. One of the main venues is the Industrial complex of Tzivre Silk Mill. It was built by the Italian house of Milan “Ceriano Fratelli” in 1910-11 and it functioned successfully up to 1958. It is the oldest and most important industrial complex of Soufli. Since 1988, the entire complex has been listed as a historical monument and work of art. Activities also take place in four other venues: the Museum of Silk Art, a neoclassical restored building, the Soufli Folk Art Museum “Gnafala”- Bourouliti’s Family Private Collection, the Silk Museum, which is a listed monument since 1994, and the Brika Mansion - Municipal Folklore Museum of Soufli, which was built around 1890 especially for the needs of sericulture and the production of silk seed and is a listed monument since 1986. The activities of Dramoinognosia take place in various locations, both indoor and outdoor, throughout the Regional Unit of Drama. Every year the locations and venues may vary. In the Municipality of Drama, the activities usually take place in squares and streets, in the archeological museum, in the Administration’s building, in the Town Hall, in the railway station, etc. Events are held in other Municipalities too, such as the Municipality of Prosotsani and the Municipality of Doxato. The event culminates with the activities in the wineries. Seven wineries participate in the event, but their list can be enriched.

The other four selected events/activities take place mainly in outdoor spaces. The custom of the Camel and the Wedding of Manio takes place in Galatista, a historic traditional village in the Regional Unit of Chalkidiki. Specifically, the custom takes place in the village’s square (Episminagou I. Hatzoudi square) and the procession takes place in the village’s streets accompanied by the camel, the bride, the groom and by the orchestra. The custom of Janissaries and Boules also takes place in the streets of the Heroic City of Naoussa in the Regional Unit of Imathia. The custom of Anastenaria takes place in Lagadas, a small town in the Regional Unit of Thessaloniki. The procession and the fire-walking take place in outdoor spaces in contrast to the preparation. Xanthi’s Old Town Festival takes place mainly in outdoor spaces throughout the historical traditional settlement of the Old Town of Xanthi. The Old Town of Xanthi is one of the largest urban traditional settlements in Greece, officially. It was characterized as a traditional protected settlement in 1978.

The selected events/customs are organized throughout the year. The customs of the Camel and the Wedding of Manio and of Janissaries and Boules are organized during the winter (in January and February, respectively). World Forestry Day in Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli Forest National Park and Dramoinognosia takes place in Spring (in March and May, respectively). Olympus and Philippi Festival are organized during the summer months (both in July - August). EuroBirdwatch in Lake Kerkini takes place in the autumn season (October). Xanthi’s Old Town Festival and Silk Festivity take place in between summer and autumn (Late August - early September and June, July or September, respectively). The custom of Anastenaria is the only one that takes place in more than one season, namely it revives on January 17-20 (the winter Anastenaria, in honor of the celebrating Saints), on July 27 (in honor of Saint Panteleimon) and on May 21-22-23, on the day of the feast of Saint Constantine and Saint Helen which is the most widespread, that is the

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culmination of the custom. The duration of the events/activities also varies. EuroBirdwatch in Lake Kerkini and World Forestry Day at Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli Forest National Park last only for one day. Even though the carnival events in Naousa last for many days the custom of Janissaries and Boules revives only for two Sundays. The custom of the Camel and the Wedding of Manio revives for three days. The custom of Anastenaria revives also for three days in January and May and only one in July. The other events last for more than one week, especially Olympus and Philippi Festivals that last for almost two months. It is worth mentioning that some of the events as Dramoinognosia and Silk Festivity when they were first organized lasted fewer days than nowadays. Another thing that should be mentioned is that some of the events were not organized at all or an online event was organized in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic. Thus the normal implementation of many events depends on the evolution of the pandemic. Other events that take place mainly in summer, as Olympus and Philippi Festivals, were realized.

The selected events have different origins, history and evolution. The events of the natural heritage thematic area are both part of a wider initiative. EuroBirdwatch is an annual bird watching event organized throughout Europe every year on the first weekend of October at the initiative of the NGO Birdlife International. The action has been taking place since 1993. In Greece, the responsible environmental organization for the event is the Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS), with which the Lake Kerkini Management Authority cooperates. World Forestry Day is celebrated around the world on 21st March each year under the auspices of the UN. This day, which coincides with the vernal equinox, was declared World Forestry Day in order to bring people closer to forest and stimulate their interest to learn more about its functions, but also about the need of protection.

Regarding the thematic area of Festivals, Philippi Festival made its first appearance in 1957 at the Ancient Theatre of Philippi. In 1961, the newly founded State Theater of Northern Greece premiered with its inaugural performance at the Ancient Theatre of Philippi and connected its course with the Festival, remaining as an organizer until 1983. From 1984 the Municipality of Kavala and DIPETHE of Kavala are the organizers of the Festival. Performances of the National Theater, the State Theater of Northern Greece, Municipal Regional Theaters, as well as free theater productions are hosted. In 2009 Thodoris Gonis took over the artistic direction of the Festival. Since then the duration of the Festival is two months and apart from hosting performances/events it includes its own productions involving theatre, music, modern dance and other performances. The Ancient Theatre of Philippi ceases to be the sole venue for the Festival and other places in the city of Kavala start to host activities, such as the Castle, the Imaret, the Old Music, the gardens of Mohammed Ali, schools, temples, cafes and also places around the archaeological site of Philippi as the mud baths of Krinides.

Olympus Festival was established in 1972 - initially under the name "Feasts of the Muses" - and has gradually evolved into a modern cultural institution. For more than five decades, Olympus Festival has been one of the leading cultural organisations for the Performing Arts in Greece, with international perspective. It brings (traditional) dance, theater, music and arts closer to modern reality, providing a unique experience. Taking place both in ancient sites and modern premises, the various events connect the past with the present. Olympus Festival remains a rare spectacle and at the same time a unique opportunity for the loyal fans of festivals who dream of mild weather, fresh air and a breathtaking landscape in combination with exciting

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performances. Since 2010, the establishment of the institution of the “honored country” turned the festival into an important agent of cultural diplomacy and led to cooperation with the largest cultural centers and museums of these countries (Louvre Museum, Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation, Cervantes Institute, Russian Cultural Center etc.).

In the thematic area of Traditions and celebrations, Silk Festivity started 15 years ago and has become an institution. It is organized by the Association Chrysallida and many other associations are participating, under the auspices of the Municipality of Soufli as well as the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. The custom of Anastenaria is a distinct part of the Greek tradition and one of the most characteristic parts of our cultural heritage, brought by the refugees of Eastern Rumelia of Thrace (Eastern Roman Thrace). The origin of the custom lies in a fire which took place at Kosti (a Greek village with 3,000 inhabitants in Eastern Rumelia near the Black Sea that now belongs to Bulgaria). The church of St. Constantine and Helen in Kosti caught fire. As the temple was burning, the voices of the saints from the icons were heard through the flames, desperately calling out for help. Villagers entered the flaming building to rescue the saints' icons and when they came out neither them nor the icons were harmed. They believed they had been protected by the saints and since then the custom revives every year. In 1923, after the compulsory exchange of population between Greece and Turkey, the inhabitants of this region of Thrace settled in Macedonia, bringing with them their traditions, such as Anastenaria. The Association ‘Anastenaria Lagkada’ started organizing this custom in 1994. Anastasios Gaintatzis is the ‘archianastenaris’ (i.e. chief anastenaris) in Lagkada and he is the only one that can ‘fire-standing’ (pirostasia), meaning he is standing on the coals while the others cross them, that is they are (‘fire-walking’) (pirovasia).

The customs selected in the thematic area Historic sites and re-enactments present some similarities. The custom of the Camel and the Wedding of Manio has its roots in the years of Ottoman rule. Based on the legend the custom reenacts a real event, regarding the abduction of a local girl called Manio by the local Turkish commissioner (Aga). The young men of the village led by her betrothed, in order to free her, came up with the trick of the Camel, similar to the Trojan Horse. They made a rudimentary camel so that some of them could hide under it and others followed it disguised. They set up a feast outside the Turkish camp. The Turks, seeing the joy of the young people, opened the camp gate and caroused with the Greeks until they all fell drunk in the morning. While everyone was asleep, her betrothed with his friend freed Manio and the next day they got married. Since then and every year, the custom of the camel is revived in remembrance of their reunion, accompanied by instruments (davuls and zurnas). The custom of the Camel takes place on the Day of Epiphany and the next day, on St. John's celebration day, the representation of Manio's wedding takes place. Bride and best man are men dressed in women's clothes. The custom of Janissaries and Boules has its roots in antiquity. It is essentially a dance event, because the action of the people who participate is a dance action. Without this dance action the reenactment of the custom is not possible. The main elements of the custom are: the formation of the herd, which presupposes the strict acceptance and observance of certain rules of custom in order to participate in it, only young males can participate in the custom, and the female figure (bride-boula) is always played by a man.



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The idea for the organisation of Dramoinognosia is based on both historical and traditional elements as well as modern conditions. The wider area is closely associated with Dionysus, god of wine and viticulture. Archaeological excavations and findings link the area with Dionysus and wine. Over the years, the traditional production of wine has been maintained in the area. In the last 30 years, some large wineries (with several distinctions) have been created in the area, which are located close to each other. Moreover, some Dionysian events are organized in the area after Christmas. Dramoinognosia was initiated by the employees of the Regional Unit of Drama (along with the contribution of winemakers) who wanted to highlight the historical, cultural and wine/culinary tradition of the area to enhance its attractiveness and tourism. The organisation of the event was and continues to be a collective effort. The event was organized for the first time in October 2014 and lasted four (4) days. In recent years, the event takes place in May (as in October in the wineries the production starts after the harvest). Xanthi's Old Town Festival, first organized in 1991, aims at the promotion and development of a residential area that has special characteristics and a rich historical and cultural heritage, so that everyone becomes aware of the responsibility we have to defend this cradle of cultural heritage and identity. During these celebrations, the city relives old memories while experiencing the present, through the rhythm of music.

The main message to the audience for some of the selected events/activities revolves around tradition. Specifically the custom of Janissaries and Boules remains unchanged to this day, incorporating the local tradition, the myths, the legends, the songs and the heroic struggles of Naoussa. The key message to the public in the custom of Anastenaria is faith. Although faith is more an experience and is approached by each individual differently, we could say that faith is a sacred tradition, a morality, a way of life, participation, hope, effort and a constant struggle for the good. The main scope of Silk Festivity is to honour and revive the local silkworm rearing tradition, the spread of sericulture, while promoting silk products and also the city of Soufli. For other events the main message emphasizes more to the distinctive character and the identity of the place in which they are realized as well as to the aspect of celebration. Xanthi's Old Town Festival is portrayed as an intermediate period that extends the carefreeness and fun of the summer holidays, shortly before the start of the school season. The custom of the Camel and the Wedding of Manio is perceived as an opportunity for people to celebrate and taste traditional dishes along with plenty of wine and tsipouro. The name of Dramoinognosia summarizes the main message, Dramoinognosia = Drama (the name of the place) + oinos (wine) + geusignosia (tasting). Thus, the objective is people to discover Drama and the wider area, through wine, local flavors, history and culture. For the remaining events the main message is quite different. The mission of the Olympus Festival is to support and promote artistic expression, to make arts accessible to all, to reveal the Greek culture and heritage, to connect the local perspective with the global one and to contribute to the economic growth through the development of tourism. Respectively, the main goal of the Philippi Festival is not only to produce beautiful performances, but to have its own unique character, different every year, to have a local sense and to evolve, without losing its roots and tradition. The main message for the World Forestry Day is the protection of the forest, which is a very important task especially nowadays, due to the negative developments in environmental issues, such as climate change, greenhouse effect, land desertification, threats to biodiversity and extensive



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deforestation. The need to protect birdlife and its habitats is also the main message for the EuroBirdwatch Lake Kerkini.

The selected events/activities include a wide variety of key activities. All of them contain experiential / interactive activities and many interviewees make some additional suggestions. Key activities during EuroBirdwatch at Lake Kerkini include information and awareness activities, bird watching, activities for children. On the day of the event the experiential / interactive activities are related to constructions for the birds (e.g. bird nests) especially by children. Respectively, on World Forestry Day, presentations and environmental activities are organized to raise awareness about the value of the forest and the need for protection. Other activities are hiking in the forest and bird watching. All the activities could be characterized as experiential as the visitors participate with a physical presence and with all their senses.

The Silk Festivity includes a lot of different activities every year, such as competitions, photo exhibitions related to silk, exhibitions of silk clothes and items, cycling tours, road races, music events, dance and theater performance, theatrical workshops, screening of documentaries and films, presentation of books, meeting and presentations related to silk, representation of the life cycle of the silkworm with the help of technological means and reenactment of traditional wedding custom. The experiential / interactive activities include interactive reenactment of the traditional works related to the breeding of silkworms and silk with the use of modern technological means and interactive technology, workshops for spinning and dyeing clothes using the method of tie dye, silk workshop for adults and children regarding cocoon creations, painting techniques on silk, spinning and dyeing silk fabrics, batik technique seminars, educational workshops for children and families (creations with threads using the quipu technique) and also interactive activities for children.

The full implementation of the custom of Anastenaria, the second selected event for the thematic area Traditions and celebrations, is in May. The preparation of the ritual starts with vigilance at the 'konaki', a special shrine dedicated to the saints, where the icons are placed among the 'amanetia' (red handkerchiefs that are considered sacred by the fire walkers and they walk on the fire only when they wear or hold them), other tributes and the musical instruments. The next night, a procession starts from the 'konaki' to the area where the fire-walking will take place. Participants carrying the icons of the saints and wearing the 'amanetia', dance over the glowing coals, following the rhythm of the musical instruments (lyre, gaida and tambourine). The ceremony lasts until the fire is extinguished. After the celebration the icons return with a procession to the konaki, where the members of the Association (fire walkers) gather. The essence of the custom lies in the ritual and in faith (and not the fire-walking). Thus, the whole process of the custom is an experiential activity. There were cases of spectators that walked on the coals. In relation to preparation it is not something you can explain or characterize. It is spontaneous, you participate with respect, love and humility and if you feel that you are ready to enter the fire, you enter. It is a matter of faith and not something that could be taught.

The selected customs of the thematic area Historic sites and re-enactments could be characterized as experiential / interactive since the spectators can also participate. The custom of the Camel and the Wedding of Manio begins on January 5 (the eve of Epiphany) and



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on that day the participants, namely the dancers, the local musicians with davuls and zurnas and whoever wishes from the villagers, pick up the bells. The bells are usually in the house of a breeder who offers them for the custom. Then they go around the village dancing with the bells. The next day, the Epiphany Day, the dancers, the local musicians, the “Camel”, the groom and the bride, a group of fustanella (a traditional pleated skirt-like garment) wearers called “Tzamalarides” as well as football and basketball clubs, participate in the reenactment. The feast takes place in the village square, where with the participation of all the people, the reunion of the groom and the bride is celebrated. After the feast is over, those who participate in the custom (local musicians, camel, groom, bride, dancer, Tzamalarides and whoever else wants to accompany) make a procession in the village. In the custom of Janissaries and Boules relatives and members of the dancers’ family participate during the process of gathering the herd in the ceremony of separation of the dancers from the family and their integration into the herd. Also the public can participate during the defined route of the herd in the city, as well as in the dances after the “removal of the face” at the end of the route.

Key activities of Xanthi’s Old Town Festival include concerts, performances, exhibitions, guided tours, book and documentary presentations, summer cinema and trade fair. Most experiential activities are addressed to the children. For example in 2021 workshops for children were organized with activities like storytelling, games (theatrical, creative writing, etc.), art activities, etc. regarding the natural environment, animals and healthy diet. The children created nests for animals (using environmentally friendly recyclable materials), made creations with clay, created fairy tales, drew maps, prepared fruit dishes and many more. Another workshop in 2021 was for the parents with the aim to help them encourage their children’s reading interest. The workshop included suggested techniques, discussion and an experiential activity. Also, a group training was held for the visitors to exercise through a route in the alleys of the Old Town of Xanthi. In Dramoinognosia every year the activities are different and are organized and/or implemented by various stakeholders. Some typical examples of activities are: wine tastings, local product exhibitions / presentation of local dishes, tastings of local products and dishes, food and wine pairing events, creation of traditional food and sweets, music/dance events and concerts, musical-theatrical performances, races, horse riding, cycling, photography exhibitions and seminars, lost treasure hunting, mushroom picking, book presentations, training seminars, workshops, presentations and lecture, art exhibitions, screening of documentaries and films, poetry evenings, observation of planets and activities for children. During the last weekend of the event the wineries are open for visitors offering guided tours, concerts, exhibitions and wine at special prices (wine at special prices is also offered throughout the duration of the event in restaurants and bars). There are experiential/interactive activities organized and/or implemented by different stakeholders that may vary each year, some of which are: creation of traditional foods and sweets, mushroom picking, tastings where participants learn to recognize the flavors and aromas of each wine, photography seminars with practical application, lost treasure hunt.

Performances in Olympus Festival caters for everyone and for every taste, promoting theatre, ancient and modern, dance, children’s performances, music, exhibitions and archeological events. Through a culture of live performing arts, the Festival cultivates understanding, entertainment and education, an attitude of appreciation and respect for arts, as well as for



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local heritage and tradition. Experiential / interactive activities included the Multimodal Activities Lab for children and adolescents, which was established three years ago, aiming at the improvement of their cultural capital, their multimodal literacy, the promotion and strengthening of their creativity through their participation in actions that combine all forms of arts. The curriculum includes theoretical courses and practice in experiential and artistic practices. In the future, organizers want to further develop this kind of experiential / interactive activities, especially in the framework of its own productions created and presented in collaboration with other organisations in Greece and abroad. Key activities of Philippi Festival include theatrical performances, children's plays, concerts, readings, photo and art exhibitions, dance performances, performances, lectures, screenings, books presentations, workshops. It is the only event that does not have experiential / interactive activities and they do not intend in the immediate future (especially during the pandemic) to have any. The only action that might be included in this category is the "Ancient Drama Workshop", as its rehearsals in normal conditions (not the last two years) are open to the public, so it operates educationally (like a seminar).

Differences are observed regarding the degree of technological, organizational, social, artistic innovations used in the events/activities under study. Concerning artistic innovations, Olympus Festival has established, in the last years, the institution of Archaeological Walks, with the guided tour of visitors to one of the many archaeological sites of Pieria, during which there are many unexpected events that pleasantly surprise sightseers. Recently, due to the pandemic, the use of digital systems for the broadcast of events has been introduced. Methods for measuring spectator impressions, profile and origin are also used by the International University of Greece, School of Management and Economics. For several years now, the Philippi Festival has emerged as one of the most productive festivals in the country, with its own "local culture", as every year it orders new texts from authors on a theme, highlighting the work of great Greek writers through a series of events inviting actors, dancers, musicians, academics and artists to work on it. Thus, the Festival brings back into our lives poets who may not have found the place they deserve in Greek literature. Moreover, it helps and promotes young artists, without any restriction on what they will present. The culmination of the Festival's innovative activities is the "Ancient Drama Workshop", a camp held in the area of Krinides (next to the Ancient Theatre of Philippi) where groups of artists stay for a few weeks and work on ancient drama, presenting the result of their work at public either at the Ancient Theatre of Philippi, or at some other place of the wider archeological site. The groups draw their subject from works of their choice or themes of ancient drama that they compose themselves from the beginning, with complete freedom in approach and presentation, with rehearsals open to the local community. In many cases, productions of the Philippi Festival or texts written especially for the Festival have been presented in other parts of Greece or abroad - which is one of the main goals of this activity. In Silk Festivity important activities, such as reenactments of the traditional works related to the breeding of silkworms and silk and representation of the life cycle of the silkworm with the help of technological means have taken place with the use of modern electronic equipment of virtual reality as well as through interaction with image and sound. For the custom Janissaries and Boules an application has been created for mobile devices so that the user can locate in real time the location in which the herds move with the dancers in the city and also read useful information about the custom. Posting live links from the area on social media (facebook) for

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the EuroBirdwatch in Lake Kerkini was one of the results of the new conditions caused by the pandemic. During Dramoinognosia products (paper or glasses) from recycled material are used. However, the organizers do not have any technological innovation and there are not many funding potentials. There is a possibility that this year's seminar/meeting will be broadcast online. In Xanthi's Old Town Festival only digital methods of communication and sale of services are used. The remaining three events/activities, namely the custom of Anastenaria, the custom of the Camel and the Wedding of Manio and World Forestry Day, also do not have any type of innovation.

The key features / services that make the selected events/activities attractive to the public vary and reflect their different character and also the uniqueness of each location. The attractiveness of the World Forestry Day is first of all the opportunity for a trip to nature and the connection with nature. The fact that the celebration of Forestry Day coincides with the end of Winter and the beginning of Spring is an incentive in itself. Hiking in nature, contact with other people and the opportunity for a creative event for children make the event a pole of attraction for the residents of the wider area. The key feature of EuroBirdwatch in Lake Kerkini is the wetland itself with its valuable biodiversity, especially the large number of rare and protected bird species. The willingness of the staff to inform the public about bird protection issues is considered as an important service. Key features / services of the Olympus Festival are the reliability and the quality of the performances, the diversity of artistic and cultural expressions, the entertaining but also educational content of the performances, the addition of new artistic movements and styles that create unique experiences and long-lasting memories, the venues of the events, the provision of high quality services, the perfect organization and the elaborate infrastructure. The Philippi Festival, also, includes a variety of artistic events, from major productions of ancient drama at the Ancient Theatre of Philippi, concerts, painting and photography exhibitions, dance-theater performances as well as experimental performances and readings in unexpected corners of the city of Kavala. The main attraction of Silk Festivity is the uniqueness of the object in Greece and also that this process is rare all over the world nowadays. The custom of Anastenaria is distinctive and special, including mystery and divinity, and the fire-walking is the most attractive activity for the public. Respectively, the main attraction of the custom Janissaries and Boules is its uniqueness in Greece along with the ritual and strictness of its performance. Key features of the Camel and the Wedding of Manio are considered the representation of the custom accompanied by duvals and zurnas and the local dishes (such as local sausages). In Xanthi's Old Town Festival key features / services are the location of the events in the historical traditional settlement, along with the quality of the events and the number of participating associations - institutions. The main attraction of Dramoinognosia is the fact that it represents a week of celebration and joy for the visitors and the residents. Also, visitors and residents get to discover and know better the city of Drama and the wider area and its natural environment.

A wide variety of key partners and supporters / sponsors is mentioned by the interviewees. Olympus Festival Organization collaborates with two state theatres of Greece, that of Athens and Thessaloniki, and also with various municipal regional theaters, with private artistic organizations and international cultural institutions. Local art groups, music schools, cultural associations, volunteer groups and individual volunteers, mainly students, also participate in



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the activities. Regarding sponsorship the Olympus Festival Organization is a non-profit cultural entity. Without access to any state assistance and subsidy, the funding of the festival comes mainly from the tickets of each event and from sponsorships and donations of companies and individuals and occasionally from donations from the state. Local bodies, the Sub-regional Administration, Municipalities and the Chamber of Pieria, also contribute financially. The main source of funding for the Philippi Festival is the Municipality of Kavala. The Ministry of Culture mainly finances the “Ancient Drama Workshop” which is one of the main activities of the Philippi Festival in recent years. In addition, hotels of Kavala and Krinides participate as sponsors of the events by offering either special prices to the host groups, or free facilities to partners of the Festival. There are also a lot of media sponsors. Key partners and supporters/sponsors for Silk Festivity are private companies, the Municipality of Soufli and the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. Local media serve as communication sponsors. ERT (Hellenic Radio Television, the public broadcaster of Greece) has also been a communication sponsor. Also, several events are organized in collaboration with various local associations as well as the museums where the activities take place (including the Piraeus Group Cultural Foundation). The Municipality of Polygyros, Municipal Community of Galatista, local associations and sponsorship of citizens support the custom of the Camel and the Wedding of Manio. Another public body, the Municipality of the Heroic City of Naoussa is the main sponsor of the custom of Janissaries and Boules, while from time to time public or private bodies may finance some of the events. Moreover, main sponsors/supporters of Xanthi's Old Town Festival are the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, the Athenian Brewery SA, Cosmote, E-Value. Many associations, foundations/institutions, cooperative groups, etc., also contribute to the event, through the organization, provision and supervision of various activities. Dramoinognosia is based on synergies among different stakeholders, such as wine production companies/wineries, food production companies of every sector and level, catering businesses of all kinds, entertainment businesses, tourism companies of all sizes and objects, commercial enterprises of all kinds, food and beverage export companies, professionals directly or indirectly related to tourism, the Department of Agricultural Biotechnology and Oenology, the Chamber, professional Bodies, cultural associations, as well as volunteers and residents. The event is funded by the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, the Municipalities and wineries. EuroBirdwatch in Lake Kerkini is held under the auspices of the Hellenic Ornithological Society but there are no sponsors. Also, World Forestry Day in Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli Forest National Park is organized by the Management Body, so there aren't any partners and supporters/sponsors. The same goes for the custom of Anastenaria that has no key partners or supporters and sponsors, which puts pressure and jeopardizes the implementation of the custom every year, due to costs. The custom takes place under the auspices of the Region of Macedonia Thrace and the Metropolitan Unit of Thessaloniki (the goal of the auspices is the formalization of the custom and the wider acquaintance of the public with the custom) but there is no other help.

A wide range of spectators/participants attend the selected events/activities. All the interviewees mentioned that residents of the local community/Regional Unit and/or Region attend the events. Particularly, participants of the Silk Festivity are mainly residents from the surrounding area of the Regional Unit and the Region. Efforts have been made to promote the events through travel agencies in a nationwide scope with the aim of attracting visitors from

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all over Greece. In recent years, there has been an influx of tourists, mainly Greeks, with great prospects to attract people from the surrounding countries. Moreover, Dramoinognosia is attended mainly by people from the local community and the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace but also from all over Northern Greece. People from Bulgaria also attend the event. However there is no research and recording (e.g. with questionnaires in wineries) about the visitors' place of origin and the duration of their stay. The interviewee also pointed out one of the problems regarding the participation in the activities of Dramoinognosia, namely that the event takes place at the same time as the "Open Doors" event (wineries are open for visitors) and thus many people choose to go to other wineries that are not in Drama. Inhabitants from all over Central Macedonia, West Macedonia and Thessaly regions and especially the neighboring regional units of Larissa, Kozani, Imathia and Thessaloniki, attend Olympus Festival. A special invitation is sent to primary and secondary schools in the area of Evros for the World Forestry Day. Many of the interviewees also mentioned that the participants of the events are from all over Greece. Seven interviewees mentioned that people from abroad attend the events/activities, but only few specified the places. In EuroBirdwatch in Lake Kerkini the percentage of tourists from abroad is smaller compared to Greeks. They come mainly from Bulgaria (large percentage), the Republic of North Macedonia, England, France, Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Spain, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Ireland, America, Canada, Israel and Australia. Increasing tourist flows were observed in Xanthi's Old Town Festival from neighboring countries, mainly Bulgaria and Turkey, before the outbreak of COVID19. The custom of Anastenaria, apart from tourists/visitors, attracts historians, folklorists and academics. Students from France and Tokyo have also attended as the custom was part of their research.

The main way of communicating with the public / customers and promoting the events is through social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest). The second most common way is through local and national media (radio, television channels/TV spots). Also three interviewees mentioned the websites of the events. Printed version of communication was mentioned by three interviewees. Specifically, posters are made and distributed at the toll booths for Dramoinognosia. Posters and announcements are also posted for Olympus Festival and a printed advertising campaign is made by the Municipality of Naoussa for the promotion of the custom Janissaries and Boules. Press presentations are sometimes held in Athens, Thessaloniki and at tourism fairs for the promotion of Dramoinognosia while presentations of the Olympus Festival program are made in various Greek cities, Athens, Thessaloniki, Larissa, Kozani, Veria, etc. Oral communication (by people who have attended the events) is also mentioned for EuroBirdwatch in Lake Kerkini and the custom of Anastenaria. Direct contact by the people through telephone and via e-mail, for question or comment, to the organizers and sponsors is mentioned by interviewees of Philippi Festival and the custom of the Camel and the Wedding of Manio. The Chairman of the Olympus Festival is the only one that mentions the printed program as a way of communication and promotion. Silk Festivity is also promoted by travel agencies, while the Association organizing Anastenaria is trying to promote the custom, among other things, by leaflets of airline companies. Invitations are sent only for the World Forestry Day to the primary and secondary education units as well as individual invitations to the pupils of the schools of the area.



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Regarding the organization and management model, the interviewees namely from the custom of Anastenaria, the custom of the Camel and the Wedding of Manio and the Philippi Festival, stated that they do not have a specific organization and management model. The interviewee from Cryssalida Association mentioned that the organizational model of the Silk Festivity is determined every year and each year there is a key theme based on which the activities are formed.

The other events/activities are organized by public bodies, management authorities and non-profit cultural organisations (see Annex I for the list of organizers and their contact details). Specifically, the Cultural Center of Xanthi, that organizes Xanthi's Old Town Festival, is a Legal Entity Governed by Public Law (NPDD) and so is governed by the laws of public bodies. It was established in June 2011 (OJ 1190B/ 09-06-2011) and is governed by a Board of Directors, which consists of 11 members with their deputies (5 Municipal Councilors of the majority with their deputies, 2 Municipal Councilors of the minority with their deputies, 3 Citizens with their deputies and 1 employee representative with a deputy). As for the Custom of Janissaries and Boules, the Municipality of Naoussa is the custodian of the custom and organizer of all Carnival events. The Association "Janissaries and Boules Group" is exclusively responsible for the organization and performance of the custom.

Lake Kerkini Management Authority was founded by the laws 2742/1999 (OJ 207A/7-10-1999) and 3044/2002 (OJ 197A/27-08-2002) aiming to administer and manage the area of the wetland Kerkini. It is supervised by a Board of Directors appointed by a ministerial decision of the Greek Minister of Environment and Climate Change. The Board of Directors consists of representatives of ministries, local authorities, professionals' unions and environmental organizations (11 members). It is mainly funded from the Greek Ministry of Environment and Climate Change through the Operational Program "Environment". The personnel of the Management Authority consists of 12 persons (recruitment in May 2008). There are a variety of scientists like foresters, environmentalists, economists, and also wardens for the patrolling of the National Park. Each person undertakes a specific action, e.g. some deal with bird watching in telescopes, some with information and some with children's activities.

The Management Body of the National Park of Dadia - Lefkimi - Soufli Forest, where the World Forestry Day is taking place, was enacted in 1999 by the Law 2742/1999 and was founded in 2003 as part of the network of Institutions of Protected Regions' Management that was created by the Greek government to harmonise the Greek legislation with the international and European regulations. It is a Legal Entity of Private Right of public benefit character, and it is under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment and Energy. The Management Body started operating in April 2005. The Ministry of Environment and Energy financed its actions until 2009 and since 2010 it is financed by the Operational Program "Environment and Sustainable Development". It is managed by an Administrative Council of 9 people that are appointed by the Ministry of Environment and Energy. The personnel of the Management Body consists of 13 persons and 2 external associates.

There are two organizing committees regarding Dramoinognosia. One is the formal committee and the other is the organizing committee consisting of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace Region employees, which organizes the program of the Festival (which is then performed by the



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contractor). The interviewee believes that an independent body should undertake the event for the best and most efficient organisation and management.

The body responsible for the implementation of the Olympus Festival is the “Olympus Festival Organization” (OR.FE.O), a non-profit culture organisation, whose members are people of letters, art and representatives of all the bodies of Pieria and the Local Government. The highest body of OR.FE.O is the Board of directors which consists of 9 members who are elected every three years by the General Assembly of the partners of the organization, which amount to about 250 people. The organizational structure of OR.FE.O is the following:

Infrastructure and Events Planning Office (technical staff), which is headed by a member of the Board, prepares the venues of the events and generally has the responsibility in everything related to the organizational part of the activities.

Promotion and Public Relations Office (journalism and communication executives), which is headed by a member of the Board, coordinates the promotion, the reception, the collaborations, etc.

Sponsorship and Volunteering Office (people from society, the business sector and volunteer groups), which is headed by a member of the Board, is responsible for finding sponsors, donations and volunteers.

Artistic Committee (persons of the art world), in charge of which is the Artistic Director, is responsible for the development of the artistic program and everything related to the artistic part of the festival.

Legal Support Office (consists of two lawyers appointed by the Board).

Management Committee (mini Board consisting of 5 members of the Board) has the authority by the Board to handle immediate and extraordinary issues during the festival.

Regarding accessibility, most of the interviewees focus on transport and road connections. Access to Eastern embankment of Lake Kerkini where EuroBirdwatch takes place is possible mainly by car (only until one point and then on foot). Access by bus to the Lake is not satisfactory and the railway connection of the area is substandard. Respectively, the most direct way to access Dadia and the facilities of the Management Body is by private car. There are regular bus services from Soufli to Dadia with return service. Also, TAXI can be rented from Soufli to Dadia. The different venues that Silk Festivity takes place are located in the town of Soufli. The goal of organisers is to connect the venues with other historic buildings and monuments of the town as well as with Associations and Museums. Soufli is accessible by bus and train, the town does not have bike paths but there are parking spaces. There is a good road connection and by city buses to Lagkada where the custom of Anastenaria takes place. The custom of the Camel and the Wedding of Manio takes place in the square of the village of Galatista, where there are parking places in the vicinity. Also the square can be approached on foot. Accessibility to the venues of Olympus Festival is mainly made by car through the national and provincial network. The festival also provides city buses from Katerini especially for the activities. There are organized parking spaces as well as parking for people with disabilities. Access to the Ancient Theatre of Philippi is made by car, where a large parking space exists.



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Inside the theatre, a ramp has been created for easier access from the entrance to the theatre orchestra for the elderly or for people with disabilities. Naoussa, where the custom of Janissaries and Boules takes place, is accessible via the national road network. Within the urban fabric there are sidewalks, bike paths and parking lots. Access to all activities is possible for all age groups and people with disabilities. Also, all areas where activities of Dramoinognosia take place are accessible to people with disabilities. Every year, one of the activities is “Market Celebration”. During that day, the city center is pedestrianized for a few hours. The organisers also want to create a route among the wineries, e.g. by bike path. However, the Regional Unit of Drama faces accessibility problems as there is no direct connection with Egnatia Odos. During Xanthi’s Old Town Festival the whole traditional settlement is pedestrianized.

Most of the organisers replied that there are no associations and connections with other similar events/activities in other countries or Greek regions. The interviewees from Dramoinognosia and Anastenaria mentioned that there are similar events/activities performed in other areas in Greece but there are no connections. The organizers of Dramoinognosia state that one of the reasons is the lack of will from the stakeholders (partners and supporters) because they perceive these events as competitive, rather than complementary. Moreover, the interviewees from Dramoinognosia and Silk Festivity believe that there could be links and cooperation with other similar events possibly organized in different periods. Lake Kerkini Management Authority mentioned that in general, there is cooperation with Bulgaria due to the existence of their own national park (on the other side of Mount Beles) but there are no connections regarding the EuroBirdwatch event. The interviewee from the Municipal and Regional Theatre of Kavala state that there were some cases such as the hosting of the National Opera and Ballet of Bulgaria at the Philippi Festival in 2013 but in general there are no connections. Only the organizers of the Olympus Festival replied that there are some connections with other counties. Specifically, within the framework of the institution of the “honored country”, Olympus Festival cooperated with Romania in 2016. Until 2020, the festival has also cooperated with the following countries: France, Spain, Russia, Norway, Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Morocco, Cyprus and Israel. The aim of the institution is to deepen the friendship between Greece and the host country and to present its cultural peculiarities. Some of the events are exclusively for the artists of the honored country, and the film is increasingly used as a means to bring the public closer to its culture.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The qualitative research revealed some key issues. There are a plethora of different cultural events in Greece, in terms of context/character, which have different origins and history. Moreover, cultural events and customs feature a substantial spatial distribution. An important finding is that almost all the selected events/activities include some type of experiential and/or interactive activities. The organizers of the events vary, including public bodies, management authorities and/or non-profit cultural organisations, which sometimes collaborate. The interviewees also mentioned the problems that have arisen due to the pandemic. Differences are observed regarding the degree of technological, organizational, social, artistic innovations used in the events under study, and some of these do not include any kind of innovation. A wide

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variety of key partners and supporters/sponsors is mentioned by the interviewees. Spectators/participants attending the selected events are mainly from Greece and particularly from adjacent areas, however some of them attract tourists from abroad. The main way of communicating with the public/customers and promoting the events is through social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest) and the second most common way is through local and national media (radio, television channels/TV spots). Regarding accessibility, emphasis is mainly given on road connections. Another important issue emerged through the interviews was that most events/activities do not have any association and connection with similar ones in other countries or in Greek regions. To sum up, this research demonstrated that even though serious issues are raised concerning the organisation and management (innovations, promotion and networking, accessibility, etc.) of cultural events/activities in BSB-GR, as well as the role that heritage and culture could play in experiential tourism development, there are many possibilities and at the same time a considerable room for improvement.



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Ministry of Tourism, <https://mintour.gov.gr/>

Ministry of Culture and Sports, <https://www.culture.gov.gr>



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ANNEX 1

List of project beneficiaries /event, festival and or cultural activity organizers

	Name	Organizers
1	Anastenaria	'Anastenaria Lagkada' Association
2	Silk Festivity	Cryssalida Association
3	Custom of Janissaries and Boules	Municipality of the Heroic City of Naoussa, Association "Janissaries and Boules"
4	Custom of the Camel and the Wedding of Manio	Municipality of Polygyros - Municipal Community of Galatista
5	Olympus Festival	Olympus Festival Organization
6	Philippi Festival	Municipal and Regional Theatre of Kavala
7	Xanthi's Old Town Festival	Cultural Center of Xanthi
8	Dramoinognosia (Drama's Wine Celebration)	Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, Regional Unit of Drama (Development Directorate), Municipalities of the Regional Unit
9	EuroBirdwatch Lake Kerkini	Lake Kerkini Management Authority
10	World Forestry Day at Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli Forest National Park	Management Body of the National Park of Dadia - Lefkimi - Soufli Forest



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Common borders. Common solutions.