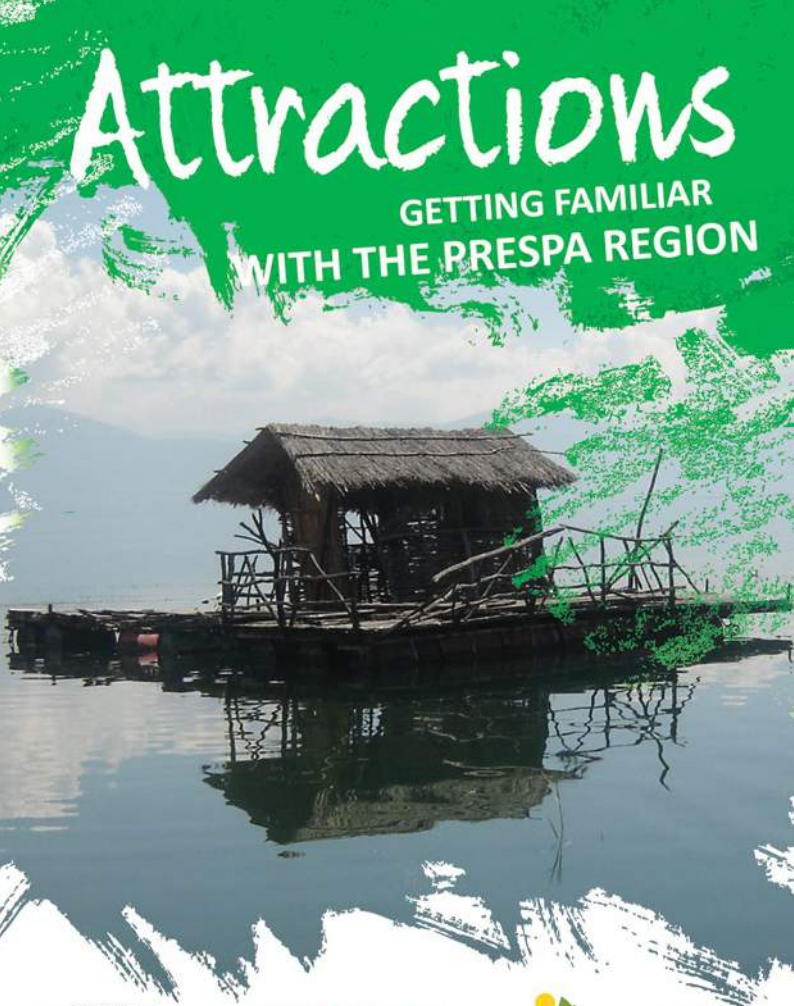
Attractions

GETTING FAMILIAR WITH THE PRESPA REGION



South Eastern Europe
SWG RRD
Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group

ABD PROGRAMME
Area Based Development Programme in the Western Balkan countries

PRESPA
CROSS-BORDER REGION

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Tourism in the cross border region of Prespa is one of the main economic activities developed especially around its lakes and in the municipalities of Resen and Ohrid. Apart from the lakes of Ohrid, Prespa and Minor Prespa, the region has several national parks (Galicica, Pelister, Prespa and Drenova Fir) and a protected area Ezerani which are characterized with specific flora and fauna that makes the region attractive to nature lovers. It has a rich cultural heritage, numerous monasteries and religious temples, diverse architecture and a variety historical monuments dating from different eras. On its territory is the village Brajchino which has been one of the pioneers in the development of village tourism in the Prespa area and the whole cross border region along with the villages Trpejca and Peshtani by Ohrid Lake.

There is also a number of activities that can be enjoyed while spending time in this area. They range from specific summer holidays, to hiking, cycling,

paragliding, swimming, food and drink tasting, visiting cultural events and enjoying traditional festivals such as Ohrid Summer Festival, poetry festivals, folklore festivals, and many more.

Rich tourism potential has been turned to rich tourism offer with diverse tourism products listed and described by the following lines.

Agro tourism

Agro tourism is present in the rural areas of in the Prespa cross border region which make the most of its territory. Tourists can get accustomed with the culture, tradition, agriculture activities, fishing and other activities of the hosts of the rural households. Agro tourism provides the visitors both accommodation in the villages and food produced and cooked in a traditional way by the hosts who also organize guided tours around the area and host the visitors of the monasteries in the region.

Culture tourism

There are numerous cultural, historical and archeological and ethological sites, buildings and localities from different historical periods that ate offered to the tourists visiting the region. The traditional handicrafts and art crafts are also part of the offer.

Culture tourism focuses on visit of the culture monuments in the area including traditional architecture sights, archeological findings, museums and other culture sites typical for the region rich in culture monuments and modern art. Saray in Resen, House of Robevci in Ohrid, National Museums, contemporary and temporary exhibitions, Resen Ceramic Colony, Korça Museums and Gallery of Icons, etc. are particularly important for the region.

Sport tourism and special interest tourism
Sport tourism and special interest tourism are also available in the Prespa cross-border area for all sport and adventure lovers. Activities from leisure swimming in the lakes up to adventurous paragliding and diving are possible in the region.

Sport terrains are available in the tourist settlements around the lakes of Ohrid and Prespa on the Macedonian side. The sport areas in Prespa and Ohrid are usually used by the national representations in football, handball, basketball and other sports. The facilities are also used by many sport clubs from Macedonia and the region.

The beaches by Prespa Lake offer beach volleyball terrains on sandy beaches, as well a tennis court in Otesevo. The valley beach, skate parks and other facilities are also part of the settlements around Ohrid Lake.

For those who like winter sports activities are organized in the National Park Pelister at the skiing centre, while recently free ski rides and boarding have started being organized on Pelister and Galicica Mountains. Villages around Baba Mountian like Brajcno, Ljubojno and Dolno Dupeni provide accommodation and one day visit to the Pelister ski centre.

Paragliding from Mountain Galicica is regularly offered by different paragliding clubs from Macedonia during the summer period. The clubs offer paragliding lessons as well and tandem paragliding. The contact and other information about paragliding in Macedonia can be found at the Vertigo Club's site: http://www.paraglidingohrid.com/.

Ohrid lake offers sports sailing. The services are provided by sailing club Bofor Ohrid. Diving is also possible in the lakes and the lessons and tours are provided by the diving club Amfora Ohrid http://www.amfora.com.mk/.

Cycling is possible all around the region. Even though there are not so many cycling paths, small narrow roads of the region are bicycle friendly and have hosted many bicycle festivities around the year including the Day of the Lake when the cyclists from all around the world cycle around the Lake of Ohrid. The clubs and cyclist from the region often cycle on the roads and off-road. Dirtrbike tracks are available in the National Park Pelister and they are maintained by the park and the clubs from Bitola.

Amateur fishing is possible in the lakes Prespa and Ohrid and is defined by the seasons. Hunting can be organized in coordination with hunting associations in Resen and Ohrid, in specifically defined periods and areas.

Mountain tourism

Mountain tourism offer in the region includes accommodation and organized tours and routes in the mountains in the region. The activities are concentrated on the areas of the National Parks Galicica and Pelister. There are hiking tours organized by the National Park Rangers and mountaineering clubs in the region. Mountbiking is possible on mountains Pelister and Galicica. Dirtride tracks are available in the National Park Pelister. Famous routes are the ones in this national park starting from village Brajcino heading to the glacier lakes where you can experience an overnight stay on the top by the glacier lakes or cold swims during warm summer months.

Health tourism

Health tourism is a part of the tourism offer in the Prespa Lake area. The climate conditions, the altitude of the Prespa Lake as well and the flora from the National Park Galicica have contributed to treating this area as an air spa offering treatments for different types of specific respiratory diseases in Otesevo, Macedonia. The Otesevo Rehabilitation Centre has a long history in providing health services in this field.

Eco tourism

The Prespa region is a fertile ground for the development of eco tourism due to its preserved and intact nature. Eco tourism offer is present in the national parks and around the lakes and includes visits to the Island Golem Grad and Natural Reserve for Birds in Ezereni on Prespa Lake. It also includes possible visits to the institute for hydrobiology in Ohrid Macedonia.

Lake tourism

The regional lake tourism offer includes regular lake activities provided by numerous beaches on Prespa and Ohrid Lakes. Prespa Lake provides good swimming facilities in Otesevo, Pretor, Slivnica, Dolno Dupeni, Stenje, Krani. Ohrid lake beaches are situated all along the lake at its both sides.

Ohrid lake activities include also snorkeling in the lake organized by the snorkeling club. Boat rides in Ohrid Lake from Macedonian side are organized by registered and official providers along different tours and routes: Ohrid- St Naum, Ohrid- Pestani, Ohrid city tour by boat, Ohrid- Struga, etc. Information about these routes and tours are available at the Ohrid Harbour.

The Prespa Lake tours on the Macedonian side are organized by local village people and the National Park Galicica Info Center in Village Stenje that also provide information and support on the visits to the Island Golem Grad. These tours include the rides Otesevo- Sirhan- Stenje – Island Golem Grad, Stenje- Konjsko – Island Golem Grad, etc. Almost all villages offer boat rides to the Island Golem Grad.

Monastery tourism
Rich historical heritage and a large number of monasteries in this region have influenced the development of monastery tourism. Typical for the region of Prespa, monastery tourism offers visits and accommodation at the monasteries of St Bogordodica in the village Slivnica and St Petka in the village Brajcino, walking along the Monastery routes on Mountain Baba in Prespa Macedonia.

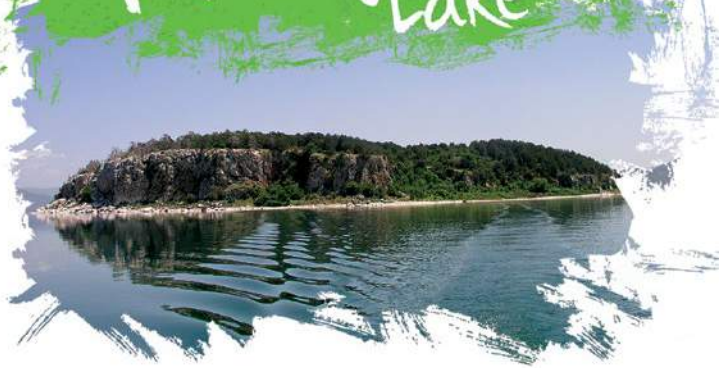
Event tourism
Numerous festivities, fairs and festivals in the region have enabled the development of event tourism. Key events which attract most tourists are the International Ohrid Summer Festival, bringing best world performers of classical music and theatre, International Theatre Monodarama Festival in Resen with artists from all around the world, Ohrid Folklore Dance Festival, Prespa Jabolkober in Resen, etc. Village holidays and gatherings organised at these occasions are a great opportunity to get familiar with the traditions of the area.

Sites and Attractions

The region's natural attractiveness is enough for visiting Prespa area, but when combined with a range of men-made sites and facilities, history monuments, cultural heritage and excellent gastronomic offer, it provides a complete impression. Any spot of this region is worth seeing, but there are several sites that should not be missed.

The list starts with the description of two region's lakes, continues with its natural parks, and concludes with cultural and historical heritage sites and attractions.

Prespa Lake



With the surface of 176,8 km2 and situated on 853 meters above sea level, Prespa Lake is the highest tectonic lake on the Balkans. It is positioned 150 m higher than Ohrid Lake and the waters of these two lakes are mixing in the terrains below Mountain Galicica. The lake is very rich in flora and fauna, and is famous for some of unique species such as cormorants. Its natural beauty is surrounded with the national parks Galicica and Pelister on Macedonian side and the National park of Prespa on Albanian side. Within its basin there is the park of nature Ezereni in Macedonia, the home of many protected bird species. There are two islands in the lake: Golem Grad in Macedonia and Mali Grad in Albania. The lake is divided in its center with the borders of three states: Macedonia, Albania and Greece.

Note:
It is important to know that different sites in and around the lake belong to the three different countries and transportation in the lake has to respect the national borders. Border crossing over the lake with boats is not allowed.

Ohrid Lake

This beautiful lake is positioned at the mountainous border between southwestern Macedonia and eastern Albania. It is one of Europe's deepest and oldest lakes, preserving a unique aquatic ecosystem that is of worldwide importance, with more than 200 endemic species. The importance of the lake was further emphasized when it was declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1979 and when, in 2010, NASA decided to name one of Titan's lakes after Lake Ohrid. In 2014, the Ohrid-Prespa Trans-Boundary Reserve between Albania and Macedonia was added to UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The towns situated at the lakeside are Ohrid and Struga in Macedonia and Pogradec in Albania. The lake is otherwise densely surrounded by settlements in the form of villages and resorts - in both basin countries.

1. Name	**NP Galicica**
2. Brief description	The National Park Galicica, situated in the furthest southeastern part of the Republic of Macedonia, is characteristic for its positioning between the two lakes - Ohrid and Prespa Lakes, for the involved orthography and the interesting geomorphologic shapes and the abundance of flora wealth (37 plant communities present on the territory of the Park, 12 of which are endemic). The Park is famous worldwide for its numerous representation of butterflies - 1644 species, which is an enormous concentration on such a small space. The class of birds on Galicica is represented with 266 species, making 84% of the total Macedonian ornithofauna, while the mammals, with 51 species, represent 62% of the total mammalian fauna in Macedonia. NP Galicica is provided with the Info Centers Ohrid and Stenje, Mountain House Asan Dzura and the marked routes and tours possibilities for different experiences starting from educational activities, hiking, mount biking, etc.
3. Address	National Park Galicica, Velestovski Pat bb, Ohrid, Macedonia
4. Contact information	Phone/ Fax +389 46 261 473 Email: galicica@galicica.org.mk Web site: www.galicica.org.mk
5. Open hours	Info Centres: 09:00-14:00
6. Contents	
X availability of guided tours	X existence of souvenir shop

1. Name	**Island Golem Grad, Prespa Lake**
2. Brief description	The Island Golem Grad is one of the three islands in Prespa Lake. The island is an archeological locality from Roman and Byzantine Times. Roman cisterns are still present on the island. There are three churches from the early Christianity which are one of the oldest on the Balkans. The island was a summer residence of Tzar Samoil. Island fauna is represented by rare and endemic species of birds like cormorants, harmless water snakes and harmful poisonous land snakes during the hot months. The tree Euphorbia, which can be found also in Caucaus, Irak, Lebanon, and Asia Minor, grows on the island. The length of the island is 750 m, and it is 450 m wide, with the highest altitude of 50 m above the lake level. Its access to water is over high rocks and cliffs 20-30 m high. The island is protected under the highest level of nature protection within the NP Galicica.
3. Address	National Park Galicica, Velestovski Pat bb, Ohrid, Macedonia
4. Contact information	Phone/ Fax +389 46 261 473 Email: galicica@galicica.org.mk Web site: www.galicica.org.mk
5. Open hours	Info Centres: 09:00-14:00
6. Contents	
X availability of guided tours	X Info centers and exhibitions

1. Name	**Pelister National Park**
2. Brief description	The Pelister National Park is located in the southwestern part of the Republic of Macedonia, bordering Greece on the south. It encompasses an area of 17.150 ha on the northern side of the Baba massif at altitudes between 900 and 2601m. To the east of the Park are the Pelagonide Valley and the city of Bitola, and to the west are the Prespa Valley and the city of Resen. The Park abounds with unique natural resources and is home of rare and endemic animal and plant species. It has numerous hiking trails: Children, Historical, Stone Trail, etc. which offer the possibility to see and experience all the beauty of Baba and Pelister Mountains. What is more, for that pleasure you don't need special physical condition, just good will. The trademark of Pelister are clear spring water and rivers where you can see Pelister and Pelagonia trout, waterfalls and glacial mountain lakes - Big and Small one, also known as Pelister's Eyes.
3. Address	Main Office: 29 Novemri 14, 7000 Bitola
4. Contact information	Phone: +389 47 233 464 Fax: +389 47 233 668 Email: np.pelister@yahoo.com; Web site: http://park-pelister.com Info Centre: Phone: + 38 947 237 010 Email address: np.pelister@yahoo.com; infocentarpelister@yahoo.com

5. Ticket price	1 Entrance fee: Daily ticket: 0,5 eur Daily groups ticket (over 15 persons): 0,4 eur Weekly ticket: 2,5 eur Monthly ticket: 5 eur Yearly ticket: 19 eur Kids below 7, and population of the NPP enter free of charge 2. Parking fee (daily) Motorcycles and cars: 1 eur Vans and minibus (to 20 seats): 1,5 eur Bus ticket: 2.6 eur. 3. Information center entrance ticket Adults: 0,4 eur Kids (7-15 years): 0,2 eur .

6. Contents

X	availability of guided tours	X	Info centers and exhibitions
X	existence of souvenir shop		

1. Name	**Nature Park Ezerani**
2. Brief description	On the Northern shores of Prespa Lake is the Ezerani ornithological park. It is a home for over 200 different bird species, out of which 62 are protected according to the Bern Convention and three species are on the European Red List. The typical representative is pelican (Pelecanus crispus), as one of the biggest birds living on the water. The unique colony of the white pelican (Pelecanus onocrotalus) within the Europe is living In Prespa Lake. The park has a surface of 1917 ha out of which 1066 ha are land, and 851 is water area. The correlation of the area is relative due to the fluctuations of the Lake Prespa water level. It is rich with natural shores of moors and reeds covered with willow trees. The park is protected and is under the patronage of various international organisations including EURONATUR.
3. Address	Ezerani, Municipality of Resen
4. Contact information	Phone: +389 47 551 770
5. Open hours	08:00 - 16:00 every day (visits have to be arranged one day in advance)
6. Contents	
X availability of guided tours	X Info centers and exhibitions

1. Name	**Ethno Museum Podmocani**
2. Brief description	One of the richest ethnological collections in Macedonia is found in the house of a local farmer Jone Eftimoski in village Podmocani. It contains wonderful examples of jewellery, weaponry, old coins and over 160 national costumes from the whole region of Macedonia. The museum also has more than 2000 artistic pieces including armory, coins, household items, etc. Jone is delighted to welcome visitors and explain the origins of his colourful artefacts. The house also offers traditional food.
3. Address	Village Podmocani, Resen, Macedonia
4. Contact information	Jone Eftimovski Phone: +389 47 489 260
5. Open hours	During day time with or without announcement
6. Contents	
X availability of guided tours	X Traditional food tasting
X existence of souvenir shop	

1. Name	**Saray Culture Centre**
2. Brief description	The Saray (saraj - palace in Turkish) is a historic neoclassical estate in Resen, Macedonia, built in the early 20th century by the local Ottoman bey, Ahmed Niyazi Bey who desired to have a French-style mansion and never lived to see his estate completed. The Saray's architectural style makes it unique in Macedonia. The Saray today houses the Dragi Tozija House of Culture, the Resen Ceramic Colony, the Keraca Visulčeva Gallery, and a library. The Dragi Tozija House of Culture is a branch of the Museum of Macedonia in Skopje. The House of Culture is also a home to plays, literary readings, and other cultural events. The Resen Ceramic Colony, also situated in the Saray, is a member of the International Academy of Ceramics of UNESCO. A permanent gallery containing many of the works of painter Keraca Visulčeva is also found in the building. A city library has existed in the Saray since the 1940s. Today, it contains over 31.000 books.
3. Address	Resen Municipality, Ploshtad Marshal Tito 20
4. Contact information	Phone: +398 47 551 770, Fax: +389 47 551 908

1. Name		**Temporary Exibition Keratza Visulceva**	
2. Brief description		The exhibition was opened after the request of the artist before her death. There is a special part of the Saray where the exhibition is accommodated. Among the art works is the portrait of the president of independent Macedonia Mr Kiro Gligorov. She is realist and post impressionist author. Her paintings are impression of feelings and soul. Full collection of art works of the author Keratza Visulceva including the unfinished portrait of Mr Kiro Gligorov the first president of Independent Republic Macedonia.	
3. Address		Saray Resen 29th of November 47, Resen	
4. Contact information		Phone: +389 47 551 770	
5. Contents			
X	wheelchair access	X	existence of cafe
X	availability of guided tours	X	existence of souvenir shop

1. Name	**Resen Ceramics Colony**
2. Brief description	The Ceramics Colony of Resen is a typical example of preservation of traditions and acceptance of international recognitions. Resen was a center of the pottery in the region. The archaeological findings state that the pottery was present here from the ancient times until the modern times, but nowadays the art crafts and the use of ceramics has been suppressed by the industries. In order to maintain the tradition the Colony tries to integrate the clay work into the artistic frame in order to preserve the importance and traditions in the region. From 1973, with hard work and support from the local government, the Resen Ceramics Colony has managed to become an internationally recognized institution which is a part of the Ceramics Academy in UNESCO. More than 200 artists from all around the world have participated in its workshops, creating their works of art. There is a fund of 800 pieces in the Colony, out of which 300 are exhibited in the Museum in the Saray Building.
3. Address	Saray Resen, 29th of November 47, Resen, Macedonia
4. Contact information	Resen Municipality Ploshtad Marshal Tito 20 Phone:+398 47 551 770 Fax: +389 47 551 908
5. Contents	
X wheelchair access	X existence of cafe
X availability of guided tours	X existence of restaurant
X existence of souvenir shop	

1. Name	**The Museum on Water**
2. Brief description	The Museum is situated at the site Gradishte in the village Peshtani, at the South-East coast of Lake Ohrid. This is the first museum of this kind in wider surroundings. The Museum on Water represents a reconstruction of a settlement from the Iron and Bronze ages, and it will be a trie tourist attraction for domestic tourists, but also for many visitors from abroad. On the South coast of the Gradishte peninsula in the Bay of Bones, there used to be a prehistoric (palafitte) settlement which, according to the investigations, spread on the surface of about 8500m2. A reconstruction of a part of the pile-dwelling settlement was made, identical to the remains of the underwater archaeological site Plocha Michov Grad, chronologically belonging to Bronze Age and the beginning of Iron Age, between 1200 and 700 B.C.
3. Address	Gradishte, Close to Peshtani, 14 km away from Ohrid
4. Contact information	Phone: +389 46 262 498
5. Open hours	09:00 - 16:00
6. Ticket price	1.7eur
7. Contents	

X	wheelchair access	X	existence of cafe
X	availability of guided tours	X	existence of souvenir shop

1. Name	**The Gallery of Ohrid Icons**
2. Brief description	Neither a summary of the icon painting, nor any anthological exhibition could be imagined without the presence of icons from the Ohrid collection. They are a remarkable and an indivisible segment of the rich cultural and historical heritage of Ohrid, the city where the Slavic literacy and culture have sprouted. Created in the workshops of Constantinople and Salonika, or in the local workshops in Ohrid, these icons have been an inseparable part of the iconostasis in the churches they have been ordered and painted for. Now, they are assembled in one place, the Icon Gallery in Ohrid, and are accessible to the senses of the numerous experts and passers-by. The different epochs have left their chronological and stylistic notes upon the icon painting in Ohrid that can be followed through a period of almost a millennium, from the middle of 11th till the end of 19th century.
3. Address	Klimentov univerzitet bb, 6000, Ohrid, Macedonia
4. Contact information	galicon@t-home.mk, Phone: + 389 46 251 935, +389 46 262 498 extension 26 Fax: + 389 46 231 302
5. Open Hours	10:00-14:00 18:00-21:00 Closed in Monday
6. Contents	
X availability of guided tours	X existence of souvenir shop

1. Name	**First Albanian School (Mësonjëtorja e Parë Shqipe, Muzeu i Arsimit)**
2. Brief description	The first secular school with subjects taught in Albanian was opened in Korça on March 7, 1887. Until then, education was only given by travelling teachers. Korça was a logical place for the first school, as it was Albania's largest and most developed city, The school was originally mixed, and a special girls' school was opened soon after, in 1891. The Ottoman rulers tolerated the schools as Albanians came in the Ottoman Army, but after Albanians began to request too many liberties in following decades, their schools were closed. This resulted in mass protests. The school continued to function until the building was turned into a museum in 1960. Exhibits inside the former classrooms show documents that are important to the development of Albanian education such as the first written Albanian text and the very first student book. The story of the Albanian alphabet is interesting too, as it was a language with no written history that was spelled in a mix of Greek and Turkish letters until the current alphabet with 36 Latin-based letters was accepted in 1908. Outside the museum, there is a charming concrete statue of the ABC with a large writing feather and pot of ink.
3. Address	L.12, Boulevard: Shen Gjergji, Korça
4. Contact information	Phone: + 355 824 30 22
5. Open Hours	09:00-13:00, 15:00-18:00 except on Mondays and 09:00-13:00, 16:00-19:00 from May to September
6. Contents	
X availability of guided tours	X existence of souvenir shop

1. Name	**Spring of Life church (Kisha e Burimi Jetedhenes)**
2. Brief description	This church, near the Mitropolitan offices also known as the Mitropolitan church, was unluckily selected by the communist authorities to be used for the Museum of Medieval Art in the 1980s, and was subsequently nearly completely destroyed to be turned into a bland concrete bunker. However, the side entrance leads to the new Shën Gjergj church at the back of the building, where the original 18th century wooden iconostasis can be viewed. The carvings in the dark wood are impressive, though not all icons have remained.
3. Address	Blv. Themistokli Germenji, Korca, Albania
4. Contact information	Phone: +355 69 246 17 92
5. Open hours	Phoning ahead is a good idea, otherwise rattle the church museum gates to attend the guard of your presence. 08:30-14:30, 17:00-19:00, on working days, 09:00-12:00, 17:00-19:00 on weekends closed on Mondays
6. Ticket price	Admission free

7. Contents

X availability of guided tours

Notes

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The Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South Eastern Europe (SWG RRD) is an International Intergovernmental Organization consisting of members from governmental institutions in South Eastern Europe (SEE) responsible for agriculture and rural development in respective member countries and territories. The SWG is a platform for networking and regional cooperation in SEE in the field of agriculture and rural development.

The SWG is carrying out the project Preparation for Implementation of the Area Based Development (ABD) Approach in the Western Balkans - 2nd phase which works on building the capacities and structures within the SWG and selected regions in order to be able to implement the forthcoming ABD programmes. The project's objective is the contribution to sustainable economic growth of the target regions: Drina– Sava (cross-border region between B&H, HR, SRB), Drina- Tara (cross-border region between B&H, SRB, MNE), Prespa (cross-border region between ALB and MK) and Sharra (cross-border region between ALB, MK and KOS*) by strengthening the cooperation of public administrations and other public bodies, the private sector and NGOs in the fields of local development and regional cooperation by building-up local and regional cross-border capacities. The project will create framework conditions within the SWG as organization and the SWG member countries for implementation of the area based development approach and in that way contribute to the sustainable growth of the rural cross-border areas of the SEE region.

This document has been prepared and published with the aim to present the region and its attractions, thus contributing to attracting visitors to the Prespa cross-border area.

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*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

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