



Project funded by the  
EUROPEAN UNION



MUNICIPALITY OF ORESTIADA

**REPORT OF THE TOURISTIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROFILE OF THE  
MUNICIPALITY OF ORESTIADA REGARDING GREEN AND HISTORICAL TOURISM  
(DT 2.1.)**

Common borders. Common solutions.





## 1 Contents

2	The Regional Unit of Evros: General overview.....	3
3	Tendencies for Green and Historical tourism in Orestiada and the broader region of Evros.	4
3.1.	Legislation .....	4
3.1.1	Planning of land usage.....	5
3.1.2	Environmental study .....	5
3.1.3	Alternative tourism .....	6
3.1.4	Cultural heritage .....	6
3.2	Tourism Infrastructure (including Green and Cultural Tourism) .....	7
3.2.1	Hotel Infrastructure.....	7
3.2.2	Green Tourism Infrastructure (besides hotels).....	9
3.3	Motives and limitations for the Green and Cultural Tourism.....	14
4	Swot analysis .....	14
5	Roadmap for historical tourism and its “green” aspects .....	16
5.1	Description of Orestiada and its environs .....	16
5.2	Statistical data on tourism .....	18
5.3	Regions of cultural and green interest in the broader region of Orestiada .....	19
5.3.1	Archaeological locations .....	19
5.3.2	Environmental landmarks .....	20
5.3.3	Tangible and intangible cultural heritage, museums and festivals .....	20
5.4	Description of pilot sites and regions .....	25
5.4.1	Municipal refreshment canteen in the Hadrianopolis grove in Orestiada .....	25
5.4.2	The Town Hall of Orestiada.....	25
6	Energy expenses and energy saving efforts in the abovementioned examples .....	26
7	Development of alternative itineraries .....	29

Common borders. Common solutions.





Project funded by the  
EUROPEAN UNION



8	Proposals for the future.....	30
9	References .....	31

---

Common borders. Common solutions.



## 2 The Regional Unit of Evros: General overview

The municipality of Orestiada, along with the municipalities of Didymoteicho, Soufli, Alexandroupoli and Samothraki constitute the Regional Unit of Evros.



Fig. 1 The Regional Unit of Evros with its respective municipalities



Fig.2 The Regional Unit of Evros and its bordering area

Evros is a borderland area, neighbouring to the North and Northwest with Bulgaria and to the East with Turkey, whereas across its south littoral spreads the Sea of Thrace (part of the North Aegean Sea) and to the southwest lies the Regional Unit of Rhodope. The Regional Unit of Evros covers an area of 4,242 m<sup>2</sup>, and has a population of 147,530 inhabitants, according to the census of 2011. Its capital is Alexandroupolis.

The region was named after the river which flows all along its eastern borders from north to south, thus constituting a natural border with Turkey. The estuary of the river Evros forms a

Common borders. Common solutions.



large wetland area, measuring 200 km<sup>2</sup>, which has been recognized internationally as a preserved area. This wetland is characterized for its rich flora and variegated species. They also form the natural habitat for rare fauna species, due also to the geographic location of the wetlands on this specific bioclimatic zone. The northern part of the Regional Unit is also crossed by the river Ardas, one of the main tributaries of Evros. An area as well-known as that of the Evros' estuary is the Forest of Dadia, natural habitat of several species of protected bird fauna, such as the black. Furthermore, the Regional Unit of Evros has many lagoons of natural beauty. Finally, the island of Samothrace is extremely beautiful, with wild, virgin nature, steep slopes of mount Saos, rich flora and fauna, forests with plane trees almost reaching the seashore. The island has waterfalls forming little pools, called "vathers" by the locals and suitable for swimming on hot summer days.

Throughout the history of the region there feature people, kingdoms, empires which made their presence felt in the southeast end of the Balkan Peninsula. Thracians, Byzantines, Ottomans, Greeks with religions, tombs, cult buildings as well as customs and rites are revealed either through the archaeological excavations or through the customs maintained to this day in many areas of Evros, south Bulgaria and eastern Turkey. The historical events which took place in the course of time resulted in transmigration of populations and in the appearance of ethnic groups such as the Pomaks and the Gagauzi. This latter group is particularly interesting for the BSB because parts of them live also in Bulgaria, Moldavia and Ukraine.

### **3 Tendencies for Green and Historical tourism in Orestiada and the broader region of Evros.**

#### **3.1. Legislation**

Tourism constitutes one of the main economic sectors in Greece as well as the fastest developing industry. Touristic infrastructure is rather developed and offers a great variety of hospitality-related businesses. On the other hand, public authorities on a local, regional or national level play an important role and are responsible for creating favourable conditions for the sustainable development of the tourism sector; yet they still have to take in consideration that there are great opportunities for development in particular kinds of tourism, such as natural or cultural/historical tourism, and thus they have to take care of the upgrading of offers in touristic services, aiming at visitors with higher incomes, as well as to variegate the touristic activities, in order to depend less on seasonal tourism.

---

**Common borders. Common solutions.**





Tourism is not only bound to specific regulations for this sector, but also to regulations relevant to other sectors, such as the environment, customer protection, preservation of cultural and historic heritage etc. The most important of these regulations are the following:

### **3.1.1 Planning of land usage**

The first step for the building of a touristic activity, following the regulations of the Council of State, is the examination of the region according to the spatial planning and the relevant regulations. The “Spatial Plan of Tourism” underlines the strategic importance of tourism and aims at: a) the reinforcement of competitiveness by updating, modernizing and improving the touristic infrastructure and b) the encouragement of the sustainable development of tourism and c) the improvement of the quality of tourism and the environmental protection.

### **3.1.2 Environmental study**

Investment in tourism requires an environmental study and an evaluation of the impact of every action on the environment. The effects of starting specific touristic businesses and their impact on the environment and on cultural heritage should be the targets of this kind of study. Its finds and outcomes lead to the acquisition (or not) of an environmental permit. The Greek law 4014/2011, as this is currently valid after its modifications, has become a standard part of the process towards environmental permit.

The ministerial decision 1915/2018 (ΦΕΚ Β' 304 / 02.02.2018), modifies some decrees according to the European Direction 2014/51 / EE (which constitutes a modification of 2011/92 / EE). Its main articles refer to the protection of the commercial and industrial confidentiality and the obligation of the authority issuing permits to offer all interested members any information they require regarding environmental issues. Finally, one more law, the recent v. 4685/2020, ΦΕΚ 92/Α/7-5-2020, «Modernization of environmental legislation, incorporation into the Greek legislation of the Guidelines 2018/844 και 2019/692 of the European Parliament and the European Council and other regulations», which sets, among other things, the framework for the management of protected areas.

Generally, the process of issuing permits includes, apart from the environmental study, also building permits, approval of architectural plans and studies by the relevant authorities as well as approvals regarding specific touristic infrastructure, such as conference centres or entire touristic resorts.

---

Common borders. Common solutions.







The law N. 4276/2014 sets the legal framework regarding touristic businesses and infrastructure. Hotels are classified according to their technical and functional features according to the decision 216/2015 of the ministry of Tourism, as this was modified according to the Ministerial Decision 17352/2018. The agent responsible for this classification is the Hotel Chamber of Greece.

### 3.1.3 Alternative tourism

According to the laws 4582/2018 - ΦΕΚ 208/A/11-12-2018 («Theme tourism; Special types of tourism - Regulations for the modernization of the institutional framework in the field of tourism and of touristic education - support of touristic entrepreneurship and other regulations») and 4688/2020 - ΦΕΚ 101/A/24-5-2020 («Special types of tourism, decrees for touristic development etc.») the conditions are set regarding each specific type of tourism, including cultural tourism (article 13).

### 3.1.4 Cultural heritage

The law 3028/2002 - ΦΕΚ 153/A/ 28 June 2002 («On the protection of antiquities and Cultural Heritage in general»), sets the precepts for protection and management of cultural heritage. As Greece is to a large extent a “source country” for illegal trafficking of antiquities, the law is particularly strict on protecting movable cultural heritage items and defining what constitutes material cultural heritage protected by law. Thus, all antiquities up to 1453 are directly administered by the Ministry of Culture and Sports, whereas all antiquities up to 1830 also form part of the national patrimony. Only items or houses less than 100 years old can be freely possessed by individuals without restrictions to their management. Most cultural heritage buildings are listed in a “Permanent catalogue of Declared Monuments” of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, which can be found on-line ([http://listedmonuments.culture.gr/search\\_declarations.php](http://listedmonuments.culture.gr/search_declarations.php))

## 3.2 Tourism Infrastructure (including Green and Cultural Tourism)

### 3.2.1 Hotel Infrastructure

EAST MACEDONIA AND THRACE / HOTEL INFRASTRUCTURE / Souce: Hotel Chamber of Greece							
2019		5*	4*	3*	2*	1*	Total
REGIONAL UNIT OF EVROS	Units	3	2	21	29	10	65
	Rooms	386	142	658	701	144	2.031
	Beds	784	293	1.275	1.302	291	3.945
<i>Evros</i>	<i>Units</i>	3	2	13	26	8	52
	<i>Rooms</i>	386	142	388	666	132	1.714
	<i>Beds</i>	784	293	761	1.233	265	3.336
<i>Samothrace</i>	<i>Units</i>			8	3	2	13
	<i>Rooms</i>			270	35	12	317
	<i>Beds</i>			514	69	26	609
2018		5*	4*	3*	2*	1*	Total
REGIONAL UNIT OF EVROS	Units	3	2	19	29	10	63
	Rooms	384	142	612	705	144	1.987
	Beds	762	293	1.192	1.302	291	3.840
<i>Evros</i>	<i>Units</i>	3	2	11	26	8	50
	<i>Rooms</i>	384	142	341	670	132	1.669
	<i>Beds</i>	762	293	663	1.233	265	3.216
<i>Samothrace</i>	<i>Units</i>			8	3	2	13
	<i>Rooms</i>			271	35	12	318

Common borders. Common solutions.





Project funded by the  
EUROPEAN UNION



	<i>Beds</i>			529	69	26	624
<b>2017</b>		<b>5*</b>	<b>4*</b>	<b>3*</b>	<b>2*</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
REGIONAL UNIT OF EVROS	Units	3	2	19	28	10	62
	Rooms	384	142	658	651	144	1.979
	Beds	762	293	1.254	1.210	291	3.810
<i>Evros</i>	<i>Units</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>50</i>
	<i>Rooms</i>	<i>384</i>	<i>142</i>	<i>398</i>	<i>616</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>1.672</i>
	<i>Beds</i>	<i>762</i>	<i>293</i>	<i>747</i>	<i>1.141</i>	<i>265</i>	<i>3.208</i>
<i>Samothrace</i>	<i>Units</i>			<i>7</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>12</i>
	<i>Rooms</i>			<i>260</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>307</i>
	<i>Beds</i>			<i>507</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>602</i>
<b>2016</b>		<b>5*</b>	<b>4*</b>	<b>3*</b>	<b>2*</b>	<b>1*</b>	<b>Total</b>
REGIONAL UNIT OF EVROS	Units	3	2	19	28	10	62
	Rooms	384	142	658	651	144	1.979
	Beds	762	293	1.254	1.210	291	3.810
<i>Evros</i>	<i>Units</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>50</i>
	<i>Rooms</i>	<i>384</i>	<i>142</i>	<i>398</i>	<i>616</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>1.672</i>
	<i>Beds</i>	<i>762</i>	<i>293</i>	<i>747</i>	<i>1.141</i>	<i>265</i>	<i>3.208</i>
<i>Samothrace</i>	<i>Units</i>			<i>7</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>12</i>
	<i>Rooms</i>			<i>260</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>307</i>
	<i>Beds</i>			<i>507</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>602</i>

Common borders. Common solutions.





### 3.2.2 Green Tourism Infrastructure (besides hotels)

#### 3.2.2.1 *The pine grove of Nea Orestiada*



When Orestiada was founded in 1923, there started a systematic planting of Rough Pine in the area, in order to create a suburban grove along the east boundary of the city. The planting process lasted until 1928. The result was the creation of a forest offering multiple advantages to the newly founded city. At the same time a square was created (based, initially, on the Hippodameian system, which was not, however, followed to the letter) designed as a “uniform group of open spaces able to function as spinal cord of the social events of the city.

---

Common borders. Common solutions.





### **3.2.2.2 Public forest system of “Trigono” in Orestiada**



This forest system spreads over the NW part of the Regional Unit of Evros and covers a surface of about 10.200 ha. It belongs to the category of oak forests, although there are also other forest species, such as maple tree, cranberry tree etc. Along the creeks one can find plane trees, willow trees and other hydrophilic plants. In 1980 reforestation plans took place at an extent of 18 ha, focusing on planting black pine trees. The forests cover 70% of the forest complex whereas the rest of the land bear sparse trees, cultivations or are barren.

### **3.2.2.3 Rivers**

The Evros basin: It covers a surface of 2029 km<sup>2</sup> and spreads along the river Evros from the Greek-Bulgarian borders (in the region of Ormenio and Dikaia), around the District of Evros, occupying the flatlands down to the plain of Pherai, including the estuary of Evros. From Ormenio to Dikaia the Evros River constitutes the natural border between Greece and Bulgaria and from there to Marasia it is the natural border between Greece and Turkey.

Ardas is the most important tributary of Evros, which irrigates the region of Trigono and pours into Evros in the region of Marasia. The entire region is a Natura 2000 protected area, as it

---

Common borders. Common solutions.







consists and important natural ecosystem; the forest spreading along Ardas is one of the most important natural habitats of Greece.

#### **3.2.2.4 Coastal regions of Ardas and other villages**



The first settlement from where the river passes upon entering Greek soil is called “Galene” (meaning Calmness). Initially it was a Turkish settlement, which bore the name Cengel, but it was renamed in 1935 by its Greek settlers after the Lausanne treaty. Nowadays it is abandoned and lies by the river and the Bulgarian borders, which helps it keep its calm and peaceful atmosphere.

In the same region lies the village “Therapeio”, a name related to healing and therapeutic practices.



People say that it was named after a custom of the people of the area, who used to gather on the 15th of August (day of the Assumption of the Mother of God), particularly those suffering from rheumatism, and followed a specific ritual in order to be healed: they dug holes on the ground and burned wood until they turned to ashes. Then, they placed branches of herbaceous plants, called “vouzia” and formed a thick layer, which they put in the hole in which the patient lay. They covered him or her with blankets and left him/her there as long

---

**Common borders. Common solutions.**

---



as he/she could take, because the heat was difficult to bear. It is noteworthy that in the region, within present-day Bulgaria, there were Roman baths and thermal springs. Very close to the village lies the Ardas dam, whereas one of the monuments worth visiting is the Church of the Dormition of Mary, a three-naved basilica with wooden roof, which has a particularly interesting painted decoration on the ceiling.

“Kastanies” is another village, right on the Greek-Turkish border, known for their Ardas Festival (“Young people’s Meeting point”), where young people from the entire country as well as from Balkan countries meet every year.



The village is a northeasternmost crossing between Greece and Turkey. It is built on Ardas’ banks, within a beautiful landscape, where the festival takes place. In the old days the village was known for its brooms, made from the plant called “sorgon” or broom-weed, from which were made the hand-made brooms for sweeping.

By the river Ardas, in the organized recreation area, is located the municipal canteen, offering the chance to visitors to relax and chill out.

The municipal canteen is an elegant building covering a surface of 233 m2, which was constructed in 1994 in proportion to the surrounding space; it is worth paying a visit in every season of the year, in order to enjoy local cuisine tastes next to landscape of unique beauty.

**Common borders. Common solutions.**



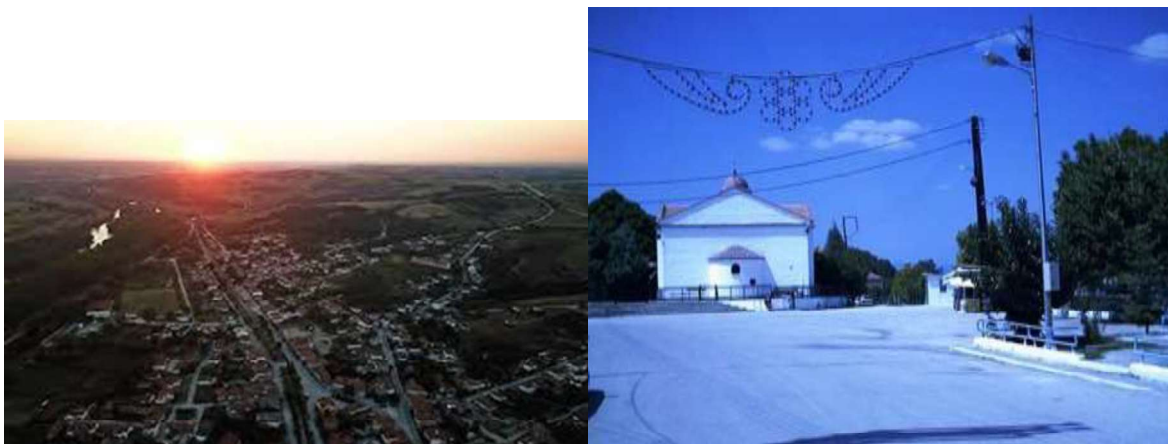


Nature lovers can roam in the forest, growing along the course of river Ardas, within an extremely important -on a national level- natural resort. Oak trees, alders, willow trees, elm trees, maple trees, plane trees, wild rose bushes and reeds, which constitute a natural habitat of rare bird species, such as herons, woodpeckers, swans, coots and wild ducks: this is the flora and fauna of the region, one of the most interesting ecosystems of Greece. Water is the dominating element, hence the area is ideal for recreation and natural exercise, even for athletic activities. The entire region is part of the Natura 2000 network.

The village “Rizia” is also very close to Kastanies.



In the same region, but on the side of the Ebro River, is the village Dikaia.



Common borders. Common solutions.







### 3.3 Motives and limitations for the Green and Cultural Tourism

Orestiada, as well as the Regional Unit of Evros in general is a particularly interesting region from the point of view of Green and Cultural Tourism. However, both types of tourism are not particularly developed. In fact the only organized touristic activity is the Ardas festival, which combines cultural activities with the natural landscape and activities therein. The fact that it is a borderland area functions in both a positive and a negative way. On the one hand, being on such an important location for international communication to both the east (Turkey and the countries further east) and north (Bulgaria and the rest of the BSB countries as well as Western Europe (as this is the main communication artery to Austria and Germany), constitutes an asset as the region is crossed daily by large number of commuting people. However, the disadvantage is that most of these people are just passers-by and that it would take serious effort to make them stay at least for a night and discover what the area has to offer. On the other hand, the political situation with neighbouring Turkey is often frail, which makes people afraid of spending time in the region, if they can avoid it. Most foreign visitors would cross over to adjacent Edirne, former capital of the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century, which offers a much greater variety of cultural heritage monuments (Selimiye Mosque, Üç Şerefeli mosque, Sultan Bayezid II hospital etc), although not in the genuine and peaceful landscape of Orestiada. It will therefore be necessary to create niches of active enjoyment of the natural environment around Orestiada, in order for visitors to fully profit from what the two rivers have to offer.

## 4 Swot analysis

Strong points	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The geographical location of the Municipality of Orestiada is privileged, as it is bordering both with Bulgaria and with Turkey.</li> <li>• Extremely interesting natural settings on the rivers Ardas and Evros, a Natura 2000-protected area with special flora and fauna.</li> <li>• Interesting cultural elements, both tangible (Stone Museum at Petrota, Karatheodoris Museum in Nea Vyssa, Ethnographic Museum in Orestiada) and intangible (Unesco-listed "Tembeleikia", traditional dances and festivals etc.)</li> <li>• Developed and capitalized on the agro-industrial potential of the city;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of the natural beauty is inaccessible, due to the fact that it is located on the borderline with Turkey.</li> <li>• Orestiada has been associated with the strong presence of the Greek army; therefore it is usually left out of the major touristic routes of the region.</li> <li>• The Orestiada area remains a destination appreciated by a relatively limited number of foreign tourists</li> <li>• Reduced diversification of the tourist offers of the destination Orestiada</li> <li>• Few accommodation units; the majority aim at accommodating the needs of soldiers and their visiting families.</li> <li>• Low performance in domestic tourism and excursions</li> </ul>





Project funded by the  
EUROPEAN UNION



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable urban development of the city to better serve the population of the Southern Development Region;</li> <li>• A region with rich ethnic traditions reflected in its festivals.</li> <li>• Low cost of labour</li> <li>• Low cost of touristic services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imbalance of the quality of hospitality in different district destinations</li> <li>• Insufficiently developed infrastructure for tourism services</li> <li>• Low visibility of Orestiada as a tourist destination</li> <li>• Relatively low funding towards actions that might enhance the touristic potential, such as exhibitions, festivals, fairs for local products.</li> <li>• Reduced cooperation with strategic partners, both inland and abroad.</li> <li>• Insufficient capacities for the management of the district tourism sector</li> <li>• The mayor's office does not manage the strategic information about the local tourism system</li> <li>• The connected infrastructure is not fully equipped with stops arranged for the needs of tourists</li> <li>• The railway network is practically unused for domestic tourist purposes</li> <li>• non-capitalization of the tourist potential in rural localities;</li> <li>• Insufficient public awareness regarding both the existing potential for tourism development and the benefits that could be generated by society as a result of this development;</li> <li>• Lack of traced tourist itineraries linking Orestiada with highly appreciated neighboring attraction spots such as the forest of Dadia or the monuments of Didymoteicho.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The "Ardas festival for Young People" has put Orestiada on the cultural map of Greece both on a local and on an international (predominantly Balkan) level.</li> <li>• Regional projects for the development of tourism infrastructure and services are taking place in the last few years.</li> <li>• Increasing the regional accessibility of the city.</li> <li>• Potential for agrotouristic development, as the area does not favor large touristic investments.</li> <li>• Interest of particular groups of tourists in local flora and fauna.</li> <li>• Developed and promoted pure ecological products.</li> <li>• Rich agricultural sector which can be used as a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deficit of cooperation between the actors from the local and district tourism;</li> <li>• Financial and economic crises;</li> <li>• Degradation of demographic indicators</li> <li>• High rates of emigration of young people</li> <li>• Low labor productivity;</li> <li>• Prone to natural disasters due to inundation of the rivers</li> <li>• Strong touristic competition from nearby Edirne (Turkey) and</li> <li>• Limited local and district budget for tourism development.</li> <li>• Influx point for illegal immigrants and refugees.</li> <li>• Tense situation with Turkey renders the region inhospitable.</li> </ul>

Common borders. Common solutions.



<p>background for gastronomical tourism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recurrent emigrated local citizens (predominantly from Germany) who need to “rediscover” their homeland.</li> <li>• Joint enhancement of the ancient Thracian civilizations (with Bulgaria)</li> <li>• Joint enhancement of the natural environment of the rivers Ardas and Evros (with Bulgaria)</li> <li>• Reviving the Orient express train line (the old one passed from the region of Ormenio and Marasia)</li> <li>• Building projects aiming at the Gagavuz ethnic group which is extant in other countries as well.</li> </ul>	
--	--

## 5 Roadmap for historical tourism and its “green” aspects

### 5.1 Description of Orestiada and its environs

The Municipality of Orestiada consists of the homonymous municipal unit and city as well as of the municipal units of Vyssa (with the municipal units Nea Vyssa and Kavyle, Trigono, to which belongs the communities of Petrota and Kyprinos (with the villages of Kyprinos, Zone, Phylakion etc).

Karagac was a suburb of Hadrianople. There lay the summer cottages of the city’s inhabitants. It also constituted a trade post, given the fact that there lay the main train station of the line Vienna-Istanbul. In 1920 it was renamed “Orestiada”, which was the ancient name of Hadrianople. With the “Moudania truce” of 1922 the Christian Orthodox inhabitants of Hadrianople and its environs are gathered there, as Orestiada/Karagac lies on the west side of Evros, accorded to the Greek state.

With the Lausanne treaty (1923) Turkey receives also the triangular area delimited by Hadrianople and the villages Demerdes (Sideropetra) and Bosna (Vyssa). The inhabitants of this region settle in Nea Orestiada, in Kavyle and in Nea Vyssa respectively. Furthermore, refugees from the entire Eastern Thrace settle on the extensive plain of Orestiada.

Due to the high educational level of the new inhabitants, agriculture is modernized and intensified during the early period after their settlement. Thrace, as well as Macedonia, are developed into a nation-wide granaries and the tobacco of Thrace turns into a goldmine after the 1929 financial crisis. A series of political and social events, however, led large part of the

---

Common borders. Common solutions.





population to emigration after WWII. During the years 1961-1971 the district of Orestiada lost about 17.3% of its population and the region of Trigono 37.6%. The main destination was Germany, the region of Stuttgart in particular. The emigrants created strong communities there, which put an effort to maintain the customs of their homeland. The ties with their region of origin are maintained to this day, as cultural associations from Orestiada visit these expat communities presenting performances, musical, theatrical or simply mimic, whereas on the other hand expats return home on organized tours or individually. These ties constitute also economic networks. Thus, the asparagus production of Nea Vyssa is almost exclusively exported to Germany. The agricultural production during the last few years presents an unprecedented flourishing, with the use of modern technologies. For example, the cultivation of garlic has been multiplied and modernized, whereas the products of the agrotouristic cooperative of women from Trigono called “Gaia” have inundated the market. The members of the cooperative are also active in the cultural field, as proved by a cultural event which took place in Spilaio in 2017 under the title: “Gastrological, archaeological, choreographic and musical museum”.

This brief historic account was necessary because it characterizes to a great extent the cultural life of the region. These are “new cities”, where the refugee element is still strong, as reflected in the content of the ethnographic museums as well as in the local customs and rites, some of which draw their origin from the common descent of the inhabitants from the Thracians. Thrace was the centre of Orphic and Dionysiac cults in antiquity. These cults were related to the celebrations of vegetation, the sacred madness caused by the consumption of wine, and to fertility. A typical case constitutes the celebration of the Dodekaimeron, the twelve days between Christmas and the Holy Epiphany on the 6th of January. To this could be added also the custom of “Babo”, reminiscence of matriarchal powers. The rites followed during these days constitutes the symbolism of reproduction and fertility, elements met in a large part of the Balkan peninsula, as proven by the fact that similar rites are extant also in Turkey and in Bulgaria.

---

Common borders. Common solutions.





## 5.2 Statistical data on tourism

Overnight stays in hotels (not campings) according to Regional Unit and Municipality (source: Hellenic Statistical Authority)					
REGION	REGIONAL UNIT/MUNICIPALITY	Overnight stays of Greeks	Overnight stays of Foreigners	Overnight stays total	Percentage (%) of total available beds
<b>2014</b>					
TOTAL IN GREECE		13,049,668	60,901,973	73,951,641	79.3
EAST MACEDONIA AND THRACE	REGIONAL UNIT OF EVROS	270,851	83,346	354,197	90.1
	MUNICIPALITY OF ALEXANDROUPOLI	168,331	70,472	238,803	90.7
	MUNICIPALITY OF DIDYMOTEICHO	16,802	550	17,352	90.8
	MUNICIPALITY OF ORESTIADA	67,121	4,188	71,309	96.2
	MUNICIPALITY OF SAMOTHRACE	12,740	6,693	19,433	82.7
	MUNICIPALITY OF SOUFLI	5,857	1,443	7,300	90.1
<b>2015</b>					
TOTAL IN GREECE		13,201,273	63,570,840	76,772,113	80.5
EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE	REGIONAL UNIT OF EVROS	218,104	116,493	334,597	91.3
	MUNICIPALITY OF ALEXANDROUPOLI	145,211	101,872	247,083	93.2
	MUNICIPALITY OF DIDYMOTEICHO	14,083	674	14,757	100
	MUNICIPALITY OF ORESTIADA	42,878	4,632	47,510	96
	MUNICIPALITY OF SAMOTHRACE	11,191	7,484	18,675	78
	MUNICIPALITY OF SOUFLI	4,741	1,831	6,572	90.1
<b>2016</b>					
TOTAL IN GREECE		13,943,606	65,941,418	79,885,024	81.3
EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE	REGIONAL UNIT OF EVROS	246,532	106,942	353,474	91.1
	MUNICIPALITY OF ALEXANDROUPOLI	169,937	94,880	264,817	93.3
	MUNICIPALITY OF DIDYMOTEICHO	14,834	508	15,342	100
	MUNICIPALITY OF ORESTIADA	42,070	3,544	45,614	95.5
	MUNICIPALITY OF SAMOTHRACE	13,686	6,305	19,991	76.2
	MUNICIPALITY OF SOUFLI	6,005	1,705	7,710	90.1
<b>2017</b>					
TOTAL IN GREECE		14,154,141	73,474,232	87,628,373	81.2
EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE	REGIONAL UNIT OF EVROS	244,885	132,986	377,871	93.3
	MUNICIPALITY OF ALEXANDROUPOLI	163,300	114,516	277,816	93
	MUNICIPALITY OF DIDYMOTEICHO	14,465	1,682	16,147	100
	MUNICIPALITY OF ORESTIADA	43,789	4,468	48,257	95.5
	MUNICIPALITY OF SAMOTHRACE	17,906	10,064	27,970	91.4
	MUNICIPALITY OF SOUFLI	5,425	2,256	7,681	98.3

Common borders. Common solutions.





2018					
TOTAL IN GREECE		13,410,226	76,494,991	89,905,217	81.6
EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE	ΣΥΝΟΛΟ	749,575	1,204,256	1,953,831	90.1
	REGIONAL UNIT OF EVROS	215,450	115,225	330,675	93.3
	MUNICIPALITY OF ALEXANDROUPOLI	143,918	96,281	240,199	92.9
	MUNICIPALITY OF DIDYMOTEICHO	9,412	938	10,350	100
	MUNICIPALITY OF ORESTIADA	41,620	5,353	46,973	95.5
	MUNICIPALITY OF SAMOTHRACE	15,790	10,626	26,416	88.1
	MUNICIPALITY OF SOUFLI	4,710	2,027	6,737	88.3

### 5.3 Regions of cultural and green interest in the broader region of Orestiada

#### 5.3.1 Archaeological locations

The burial mound at Mikri Doxipara- Zoni: In the beginning of the 2nd c. AD four members of a rich family of land owners who died one after the other were incinerated and buried at the same spot, close to the road leading from Hadrianople to Philippoupoli (Plovdiv). Over the location was buried a large burial mound, in order to commemorate the deceased. This spot nowadays forms part of the municipality of Kyprinos and is located close to the villages Little Doxipara, Zone and Chelidona. With the excavation were discovered four large pits containing the remains of the burials of three men and a woman along with numerous other objects which accompanied them to the underworld, such as clay, glass and bronze vessels, bronze candelabra and oil lamps, bronze torches, weapons, jewellery, wooden little boxes etc. The five carriages with which the deceased were transferred to the burial area were also buried there along with the carrying animals. Another five horses were buried next to them. All carriages preserve their metal functional and decorative elements, whereas two of them maintain the prints of their wooden parts. The protection and enhancement of the site has already been planned.

Palaeolithic settlement at Rizia: Close to the village Rizia have been discovered remains of a palaeolithic settlement with two layers, one of the Middle Palaeolithic with scales and one of the Upper Palaeolithic with blades. Furthermore, some possible Mesolithic finds were located in Keramos as well as a settlement from the early Iron Age.

Dikaia: Prehistoric settlement of the early Iron Age.

---

Common borders. Common solutions.

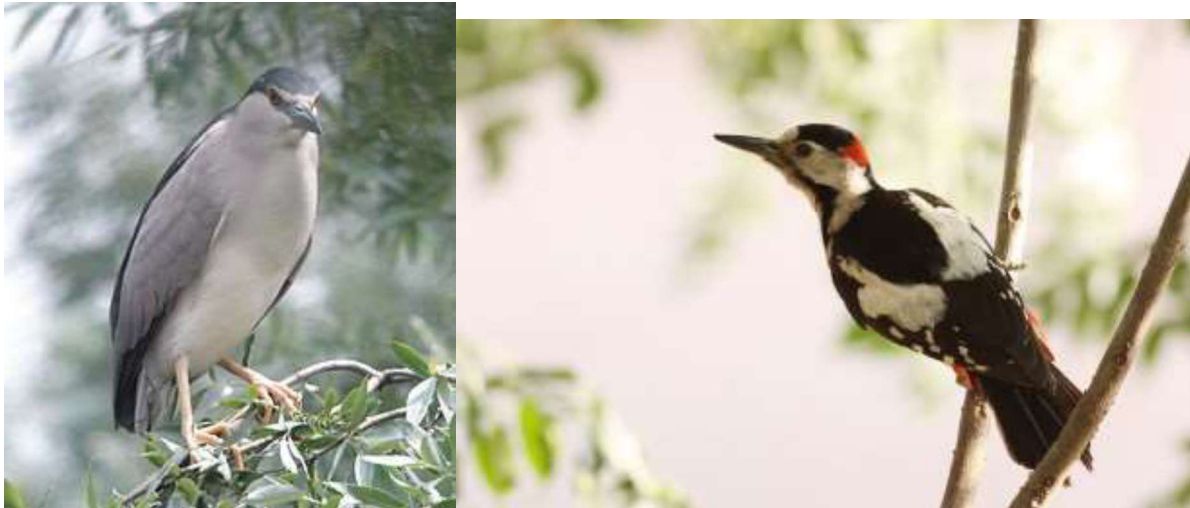






### 5.3.2 Environmental landmarks

Wildlife reserve at Kalos Gialos



“Angelos” habitat at Komara

### 5.3.3 Tangible and intangible cultural heritage, museums and festivals

#### 5.3.3.1 Customs and Rites

Some of the most wide known customs of the region occur in the so-called *Dodekaimeron* (i.e. the period between Christmas and the Holy Epiphany), among which prevail the carols sung by young people in special costumes. These bear different names in each village, e.g. *Baboudiareoi* or *Babutsiaroi* in Rhegion, *Tsamala* or *Kamila* (Camel) in Rizia etc.

The most renowned ones are the *Tebelekia*, traditional carols of Nea Vyssa, sung by young people of the community under the sounds of tambourines; the singers are disguised as animals, among which prevails the “Camel Leader”. In 2019 this custom was enlisted in the National Catalogue of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Greece.

“The Bey”: In its basic form the “Bey” is a local leader who visits the houses of the village along with his escort. Villagers offer them treats and the Bey gives good wishes for prosperity. In the central square takes place a simulation of plowing, sowing and sexual mating,

---

Common borders. Common solutions.



symbolizing death and rebirth. The custom takes place mainly in Didymoteicho, Orestiada and Trigono.



«Babo»: This is a custom imported by the refugees from North and East Thrace. It takes place on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January, in order to honour the figure of the grandmother, whose contribution during labour of women was usually crucial.



Common borders. Common solutions.





### 5.3.3.2 Musical tradition

The different ethnic groups that settled in the region of the municipality of Orestiada brought along their own musical traditions, as well as the respective dances and costumes. Many associations and groups of young people maintain these traditions and perform in any given circumstance.

### 5.3.3.3 Exhibitions and Museums

*Archaeological collection of Spelaion, Orestiada:*



This brief exhibition presents mainly photographs and molds from the finds of the excavations in the surrounding area, particularly from the burial mound at Mikri Doxipara, in a predominantly educational context.

*Stone museum at Petrola:*



The museum hosts mainly stones, fossilized wood, corals and crystals from the broader region, classified in six collections; it also exhibits

**Common borders. Common solutions.**





artifacts which resulted from stonework. The photographic material and the explanatory texts informing visitors on the geology of the area, the features of the stones, the mining sites and the mining and stonework techniques and tools is particularly rich.

*Historic and Folklore Museum of Nea Orestiada and region:*



The museum was founded in 1974 and was renovated in 2010. It aims at the study and enhancement of local cultural heritage. The exhibits which reveal the history of Orestiada as well as aspects of the daily life of its inhabitants are organized in a thematic way, thus aiding the experiential transfer of the visitor in time.

*Folklore Museum of Nea Vyssa:*



Common borders. Common solutions.





In the Cultural Centre of Nea Vyssa is hosted a collection of ethnographic and folklore material, comprising objects of the agricultural activities of the inhabitants, household utensils and vessels, tools, icons, traditional costumes and their ornaments, old banknotes, embroideries and many photographs.

*Karatheodory Museum:*



This museum, which constitutes the investment site of the municipality of Orestiada in the project GreeThis, will present digital material on the life and careers of the Karatheodory family in an old, no longer used, school.

#### **5.3.3.4 Festivals**

“Meeting of Young People-Ardas”: In the village of Kastanies, next to the banks of the river Ardas, the “Meeting of Young People-Ardas” since 1995, where young people from all over Greece as well as from Balkan countries meet every year. During the event take place concerts by renowned Greek singers and musicians as well as parallel exhibitions, video projections, presentations of youth organizations, athletic contests, theatrical performances, etc, whereas a special radio station emits a programme, voluntary activities take place, events placed on local traditions offer visitors a contact with gastronomy and crafts, and ecotouristic excursions introduce the region’s rich nature to young people. Visitors, not necessarily only youth, meet and camp for five days by the “river of culture”, thus sending through all the events and activities the message of peaceful co-existence.

---

Common borders. Common solutions.





## 5.4 Description of pilot sites and regions

### 5.4.1 Municipal refreshment canteen in the Hadrianopolis grove in Orestiada



Right in the centre of the Hadrianopolis grove is located the municipal refreshment bar, next to which is located the municipal playground “Halcyon”. In the area surrounding the bar during the summer months are organized many events, such as the Flowers’ exhibition in the beginning of May and the “Oresteia”, a series of activities and events taking place in mid-June centered around the foundation of the city of Orestiada. The existence of a municipal open-air theatre with a capacity of 1000 spectators facilitates these events; it also hosts theatrical performances as well as the yearly “Pan-hellenic festival of Amateur Theatre” at the end of August.

### 5.4.2 The Town Hall of Orestiada



Orestiada has been characterized as the newest Greek city. It was founded in 1923 by Greek refugees, inhabitants of nearby Hadrianople and particularly of its suburb, Kara Ağaç, both now on Turkish soil.

Common borders. Common solutions.







The city's central square, harmoniously incorporated within the “Hippodameian” town plan, constitutes the heart of the commercial centre of the city and plays an important role within the financial and social life of the inhabitants. It is a space of high quality standards, welcoming visitors and inviting them to explore the sightseeing spots and to prolong their stay in the region.

The Town Hall of Orestiada dominates the central square of the city. It was founded in 1953 under the mayor Athanasios Pantazides and constitutes a typical architectural specimen of those days. It covers a total surface of 1246m<sup>2</sup>, with a tiled roof, and hosts the central services of the municipality. Its halls are spacious and classy, decorated with marble and wood. In front of the Town Hall stands the statue of the martyred Patriarch Cyril VI. The surroundings of the Town Hall are decorated by trees, bushes and many rose trees, creating niches of freshness.

A noteworthy fact is that on the west side of the square has been placed a photovoltaic tree, with lamps glowing at night using solar energy, accumulated during the day by photovoltaic panels.

## 6 Energy expenses and energy saving efforts in the abovementioned examples

According to the latest National Energy and Climate Plan of Greece (2019), within the energy efficiency dimension, the objective is to achieve energy savings in final energy consumption of at least 32,5% compared to the projected evolution of final energy consumption by 2030. As far as the residential buildings is concerned, the target is to upgrade or replace with new energy-efficient ones at least 40,000 homes per year. In general, building sector plays an important role in the efforts made towards the increase of energy efficiency. Therefore, as stated in this report, a number of technologies and solutions have been developed to improve energy efficiency of buildings.

As far as historical buildings are concerned, their energy efficiency upgrade constitutes a complex work due to the many issues that need to be addressed. This is why the obligations set by the Greek EPB regulation are not applied to historical buildings. Besides the officially protected historical buildings, Greece also has a group of pre-1955 building stock that comprises representatives of local architectural traditions with usually remarkable elements that may interfere with energy renovation activities. Alexandrou et al (2018) provide a

---

Common borders. Common solutions.





methodology for implementation of energy efficiency interventions in buildings constructed before 1955 in Greece. They provide with a suggestion for classification of buildings constructed pre-1955 into five distinct categories based on the heritage value and construction characteristics of each building. A specific category is suggested for buildings listed as monuments and for listed buildings. A third category includes buildings in listed traditional settlements and the last two categories refer to the pre-1955 buildings with or without particular architectural value. Following the classification, technical guidelines have been developed for the application of energy efficiency measures and their implementation consists of four distinct stages: a) building inspection and evaluation stage, b) concept-design stage, c) approval of evaluation and design proposal including in-situ audit-procedures by authorities and d) final design and issuance of building permit stage, followed by site inspection and supervision of the implementation works.

Energy efficient interventions in historical monuments and buildings require a multidisciplinary approach, expert knowledge and proper guidance. The limitations set by the preservation regulations, as well as the uniqueness of each building increase the difficulty of implementing energy saving measures. It is therefore hard to classify and dictate appropriate common solutions for such buildings even in the same country, since in addition to the above, monuments and listed buildings were built under different historic and socioeconomic circumstances.

Until today, several restoration and conservation projects on historical monuments and buildings have been completed within the Region of East Macedonia and Thrace, Greece. However, their goal is not directly related to energy efficiency and the only measures applied in this area include the installation of new energy efficient electromechanical equipment and more less usually the replacement of windows. Examples of such projects include the renovation of tobacco warehouse of Drama that is now a five star hotel (Hydrama Grand Hotel) (figure 11), the renovation of tobacco warehouse of Alexandroupolis that operates now as the municipal library and the renovation of several listed private buildings in the old city of Xanthi. Hydrama Grand Hotel includes new wooden framed, double-glazed windows, as well as low energy consumption air-chilled heat pumps for heating and cooling of the building.

---

Common borders. Common solutions.





Figure 11. Hydrama Grand Hotel, a renovated old tobacco warehouse

Municipal Library of Alexandroupolis also includes new wooden framed, double-glazed windows. The renovation of building included also installation of natural gas boilers for heating, which will be installed upon the availability of natural gas in Alexandroupolis.

---

Common borders. Common solutions.







Figure 12. Municipal library of Alexandroupolis, a renovated old tobacco warehouse

## 7 Development of alternative itineraries

Although the Regional Unit of Evros appears in several itineraries of a cultural or/and green tourism, visitors rarely reach the region of the Municipality of Orestiada, to the exception, of course, of the festival periods. In 2017 a special conference took place on “Cultural Heritage and Local Administration”, where some solutions to this phenomenon were proposed by the researchers I. M. Kouzas and V. I. Kouza. The only established itinerary appearing, at least, in the media, is the one connecting the villages of Trigono.



Even more problematic is the fact that Orestiada does not have an established direct communication-transportation network with other BSB countries, not even with southern Bulgaria, although bus and train connections to other municipalities in the regional Unit of Evros is relatively good. There are two train itineraries from Alexandroupolis to Ormenio and seven bus itineraries leading to Orestiada. The road network is pretty good.

## 8 Proposals for the future

Examples from other municipalities in the broader region demonstrate that the role of the local administration is pretty pivotal in shaping the future of historic and green tourism. What is proposed in this report is for the municipality to map the elements that need to be enhanced, either these comprise tangible and intangible heritage or the natural endowments of the region. Collaboration needs to be achieved between the municipality of Orestiada and the adjacent municipalities, in order to develop itineraries of a thematic perspective, focusing on archaeology, history, customs, gastronomy, nature etc. Tour operators and agents will then need to be invited to publicize these itineraries and incorporate them in their own tours. Funding these efforts will not be difficult: programs such as CLLD/Leader could be easily used whereas the large network of emigrants in Germany and other countries could be asked to contribute to the cultural and natural enhancement of the region, as happened with the museum at Petrota.

Unfortunately, one of the reasons for the lack of development of green and historical tourism in the region to the extent that it would be possible is the tense situation with neighboring Turkey and, in the past few years, the influx of foreign refugees and immigrants, which has caused militia and police patrols to be intensified. On the borderline between the two countries there are still extensive minefields, which can prove dangerous for freelance visitors. On the other hand, the fact that an established gateway to Turkey is situated at Kastanies can prove (and has proved in the past) as an asset for tourists from the neighbouring country. When the political situation becomes stable again, an effort will have to be made to attract visitors bothways (i.e. Turkish people visiting Greece or Greeks visiting Turkey) to spend a night at least in the region of Orestiada and enjoy some of the natural and historic gems of the region. Facilities such as organized camping stations, boutique hotels and attractive infrastructure (such as wooden huts in nature) would enhance dramatically the touristic aspect of the municipality of Orestiada. Furthermore, organized tours by local entrepreneurs to sightseeing spots within the Municipality or in the broader region (e.g. Didymoteicho, Dadia etc) will facilitate freelance visitors to stay longer in the region.

---

Common borders. Common solutions.



## 9 References

Κούζας, Ι., «Το Ορμένιο ως τόπος σύγκρουσης χριστιανικών δυνάμεων και Μωαμεθανών: Η μάχη του Τζερνομιάνου (1371)», στο: Μανωλάς, Ε. (επιμ.), Πρακτικά 1ου συνεδρίου Ορεστιάδας «Ορεστιάδα: Διαδρομές στο χρόνο», Νέα Ορεστιάδα 2016, σ. 17-27 [Η έκδοση των πρακτικών εδώ: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3Sh8OQ-DXrYM0UxblZwVnZtY00/view> ]

Μπεχτσούδη, Α. Σ., «Ρίζια: Ένα ταξίδι στο χρόνο», στο: Μανωλάς, Ε. (επιμ.), Πρακτικά 1ου συνεδρίου Ορεστιάδας «Ορεστιάδα: Διαδρομές στο χρόνο», Νέα Ορεστιάδα 2016, σ. 123-129 [Η έκδοση των πρακτικών εδώ: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3Sh8OQ-DXrYM0UxblZwVnZtY00/view> ]

Ολμπασάλη, Β., «Οι Γκαγκαβούζηδες του Θουρίου», στο: Μανωλάς, Ε. (επιμ.), Πρακτικά 2ου συνεδρίου Ορεστιάδας 2017 «Πολιτιστική Κληρονομιά και Τοπική Ανάπτυξη», Ν. Ορεστιάδα 2019, σελ. 325-338 [Η έκδοση των πρακτικών εδώ: <https://www.orestiada.gr/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/TEL-ORES-2R.pdf>]

Φουρνομίτη, Μ., Αλεξόπουλος, Α., Πλέσσας, Σ., κ.ά., «Δυναμικό απόδοσης σε βιομάζα και αιθέριο έλαιο της ρίγανης, του θυμαριού, του φασκόμηλου και του δεντρολίβανου στην περιοχή του Βόρειου Έβρου», στο: Μανωλάς, Ε. (επιμ.), Πρακτικά 1ου συνεδρίου Ορεστιάδας «Ορεστιάδα: Διαδρομές στο χρόνο», Νέα Ορεστιάδα 2016, σσ. 331-344 [Η έκδοση των πρακτικών εδώ: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3Sh8OQ-DXrYM0UxblZwVnZtY00/view> ]

Alexandrou, E. et. a., "Technical guidelines for energy efficiency interventions in buildings constructed before 1955 in Greece", in: Broström, T., Nilsen, L., Carlsten, S. (eds.), Conference Report. The 3rd International Conference on Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings, Visby Sweden, September 26-27, 2018, Uppsala University, 2019, pp. 294-301. [[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337591108\\_Energy\\_Efficiency\\_in\\_Historic\\_Buildings\\_2018\\_Technical\\_guidelines\\_for\\_energy\\_efficiency\\_interventions\\_in\\_buildings\\_constructed\\_before\\_1955\\_in\\_Greece](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337591108_Energy_Efficiency_in_Historic_Buildings_2018_Technical_guidelines_for_energy_efficiency_interventions_in_buildings_constructed_before_1955_in_Greece)]