



Discover Shar Mountain

"What is offered and what to do for future ..."

Study of tourism opportunities
in Polog and Prizren regions

February, 2019



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Content

Introduction.....	5
Economic Polog region - Republic of North Macedonia	6
Economic Region South - Kosovo	11
The Shar Mountain.....	16
General information about the natural values of Shar Mountain.	16
Geology	17
Geomorphology.....	17
Hydrology	18
Climate	19
Flora	19
Fauna	20
Agrobiodiversity.....	21
Fungi	22
Cultural heritage in the region of Sub-Shar Mountain / Polog	22
Cultural heritage in the region of Shar Mountain - South Economic Region Kosovo	24
Ethnology - Polog Region	25
Ethnology/ South Economic Region Kosovo	26
Communication – Economic Polog Region.....	26
Communication / Economic Region South Kosovo	27
A brief overview of the development history of mountain tourism on Shar Mountain in the Polog Region	28
A brief overview of the development history of mountain tourism on Shar Mountain in the South Economic Region Kosovo	30
Interest in visiting the values of Shar Mountain	31
The interest of foreign tourists to visit Shar Mountain - Polog Region.....	32
The interest of foreign tourists to visit Shar Mountain - Kosovo side.....	34
Analysis of the existing mountain / recreational paths and the existing infrastructure related to the paths – Polog Region.....	35
Analysis of the existing mountain/recreational paths and the existing infrastructure related to the paths - Kosovo side.....	36
Law on Marking of Mountaineering Paths - North Macedonia	37
Law on Marking of Mountaineering Paths - Kosovo	38
Mountaineering paths that are marked according to the law on hiking trails of North Macedonia	39
Mountaineering paths that are marked on Kosovo side	40
Printed Guides, Maps, Digital Applications and Websites, emerged on the Sharr Mountain Trails already marked	42
Strategic documents for the region	43

Discover Shar Mountain

"What is offered and what to do for future ..."



Study of tourism opportunities in CBC Area of Shar Mountain

(North Macedonia with Polog Region and Kosovo with Sirinich-Prizren-Gora Regions)

Introduction

The Shara Mountain with all its surroundings, as a cross-border region with the overall specifics (spatial, geographical, geomorphological, biological, cultural, hydrographic, ethnological, historical, climatic, ecological and potential for sport), is a potential that can be successfully valorized in a tempting tourist offer for consumers from the wider scope of the Balkan countries, Europe and the World.

The crossborder region has all the prerequisites for achieving the level of established European tourist destinations. This can be confirmed by some existing examples from previous periods, which have been going on over the years.

The mountain tourism represents an important segment of the overall tourism activity with serious potential and objective opportunities for further development. The mountain tourism, in the near future, will be a generator of the future local tourist and economic development of the places and villages under Shar Mountain (rural areas), their interconnectivity through creating hiking trails, mountain biking, downhill skiing and snowshoeing movement. For this purpose, it is necessary to provide and define goals for a uniqueness of the region seen as a touristic content, with a particular emphasis on rural areas, the advantages for the development of certain places in these areas and the values of Shar Mountain.

The biggest issue encountered so far is located in the absence of a jointly modeled principle and a method of acting in propagation of the potentials of the region, the lack of trainings and lectures on economic sustainability in rural tourism works, insufficient coordination, cooperation and sharing information among tourist workers, paralel approach on the same market with different offers, ignorance and insufficient information for the touristic potential and the trends of rural tourism.

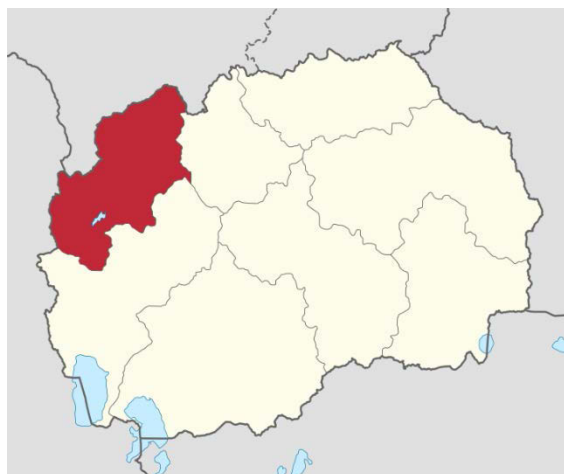
With a serious and a realistically made development strategy of Shar Mountain as a cross border area, the region will emerge from anonymity and will become recognizable on a wider scale.

Only on this way, the individual efforts of the interested stakeholders for affirmation of their own visions for a realistic tourist offer, will be integrated into one vision. And only then we will be ready for promotion of the region, and thus for welcoming tourists. All of that will initiate also development of additional profitable activities in the tourism field in the future.

This will help raise the awareness of the local population for the need for development of mountain tourism, as an important segment of the society.

Economic Polog region - Republic of North Macedonia

The Polog region or the [Polog Planning Region](#), according to the Law on balanced regional development, is one of the eight planning regions in Republic of North Macedonia and consists of the following municipalities: Tetovo, Gostivar, Mavrovo and Rostuse, Zhelino, Tearce, Bogovinje, Vrapchishte, Jegunovce and Brvenica. It covers an area of 2416,91 km² and includes a total of 184 settlements which are comprised of 304.125 inhabitants, of which 73,2 % ethnic Albanians, 18,4% ethnic Macedonians, 5,7% Turks, 1,6% Roma, 0,01% Vlachs, 0,32% Serbians, 0,08% Bosnians and 0,66% other¹.



The Polog Planning Region includes the Polog valley, which in the south is bordered by the Mavrovo (national park) which is a part of the mountain massif Bistra, in the south-west it borders with the valley of the river Radika and the mountain massifs of Korab and Deshat, to the west and northwest with Shar Mountain, and to the east with the mountains Zeden and Suva Gora. The Polog valley is located in the northwestern part of the Republic of North Macedonia in the direction of southeast - northwest, with approximate length of 55 km and width 8 - 10 km.

The wealthy Polog valley is located at an altitude of 400 to 550 m. It is divided into the Upper Polog, in which the largest settlement is Gostivar, and Lower Polog with the city of Tetovo.

The climate in the Polog region is medium-continental with plenty of sunny days throughout the year. Fog is quite common but during the winter months. This climate offers great opportunities for recreation and practicing outdoor activities during the whole year.

Shar Mountain covers the largest mountainous area of the Polog Region. Limiting the region to the north, west and southwest, Shar Mountain is territorially divided among 7 municipalities (Jegunovce, Tearce, Tetovo, Bogovinje, Vrapchiste, Gostivar and Mavrovo and Rostuse). The part of Shar Mountain, which belongs to the territory of the municipality of Mavrovo and Rostuse, is part of the National Park "Mavrovo". Apart from the municipalities of Tetovo and Gostivar, the rest are rural and each of these municipalities has a huge potential for developing rural tourism in the sub-mountainous settlements.

Each of the aforementioned municipalities (except for Mavrovo and Rostuse²) in the developed strategies for local economic development, have included the parts of Shar Mountain, as future

¹Study, „Fostering alternative tourism in rural areas of Polog” (Polog region geography), Center for the development of the Polog planning region, Tetovo 2015, page.6.

²the part of Shar Mountain belonging to the municipality of Mavrovo and Rostuse is part of the national park "Mavrovo". The strategies are a part or are aligned with the plan and strategies of the national park "Mavrovo"

potential spots for practicing mountain tourism. In each of the municipalities in part of the inhabited places development of rural tourism begins by an initiation of the private sector. Depending on the territory of the municipalities that encompass Shar Mountain and according to the developed municipal strategies, the places for future development of rural/mountain tourism can be defined.



In the area that encompasses Shar Mountain, which is a part of the **Municipality of Jegunovce**, the Ljuboten-Livadski segment stands out. The characteristic of this massif, in regards to mountain tourism, is the peak Ljuboten with the place Ljuboten, where the oldest mountain hut in North Macedonia "Ljuboten" is located. The hut has been built in 1931. It is located at an altitude of 1635 meters, just below the peak, at the edge of a beech forest.

This part of Shar Mountain is well visited and well known among people practicing mountain sports, recreation and outdoor activities. Characteristic mountainous locations in municipality of Jegunovce are the peak Ljuboten, Livadichko Lake, Kuchinagledski Peak, Rogachevski Korita (troughs), Livadichki Bachila, Kamche and Belovishki Waterfall (the longest waterfall on the Shar Mountain). The settlements that offer opportunities for rural tourism development are the villages of Belovishte, Vratnica, Rogachevo and Stare Selo. Points that have potential, and are functioning, or they are in a development phase are: Kalugjer, Petachko Vodiche, Vratnichko Lake, etc.



The mountain part of the **Municipality of Tearce** is characterized by the valley of the river Bistrica. In this part, Shar Mountain is characterized by the Gabrovnichki and Chaushichki massif. The "Tri Vode" (Three Waters) excursion site, located in the middle course of Bistrica River, offers ideal conditions for practicing outdoor activities. During the sixties of the last century, the "Tri Vode" ("Three Waters") Mountain Hut was built on this site, which no longer exists, but there are several private small weekend houses at the same location today. Characteristic locations for this part of Shar Mountain are the peaks of Crn Kamen (Blak Stone), Ezerski Vrv (Lake Peak), Peskovi, Konjushka and Dobroshki Vrv (Peak), the glacial lakes, Gorno and Dolno Dobroshko Lake (Upper and Lower Dobroshko Lake) and the places Melovo, Brezjanski Kule (Brezjanski Towers), Chaushichka Lokva and Jeloshnichki Bachila. The settlements distinctive by their architecture and position, important as a starting points for hiking and cycling, are the villages of Brezno and Jeloshnik, which are located at an altitude of 900 meters. The village of Tearce, as the largest in this municipality, offers all the conditions as a place which logistically can "serve" the above mentioned locations. In this region, the most important place, which refers not only to the cultural

values, but also to the traditions and natural landmarks is the village of Leshok, more precisely the Leshok Monastery.



The largest part of the territory of the **Municipality of Tetovo** is covered by Shar Mountain, more exactly the central part of Shara Mountain with the valley of River Pena and its tributaries, the highest massif of Titov Vrv (Titov Peak) and the ski center Popova Shapka. Of course, the most important place in this municipality is the ski center Popova Shapka. One of the oldest ski centers in the Balkans, from the distant 1934. During the eighties of the last century, this ski center stands out among the three largest centers in former Yugoslavia. Today the ski center is with an outdated infrastructure. The center has several hotels, one of which is categorized with 4 stars, two with 3 stars, and others are categorized as resorts, hotels with basic conditions and mountain huts. Within the center there is a weekend settlement with over 500 weekend houses. The center has 2 cable cars and 4 ski lifts. The total length of the ski trails is 15.6 km, which covers an area of 53.6 hectares, and the total capacity of skiers per hour is 3.024 skiers. A new activity that has been introduced and practiced over the past seven years is Snowcat Skiing. The Popova Shapka Center is active throughout the whole year. In the winter period, except skiing, snowshoeing movement and ski touring is also practiced. During the other months, Popova Shapka is a great starting point for hiking and biking trails, attractive for paragliding and recreation of every kind. Its position at an altitude of 1700 meters is ideal for summer vacations in fresh air. The localities that characterize this municipality are: Jelak, Leshnica, Shipovecki Bachila, Karanikolichki Lakes, the middle course of River Pena and the valley of River Vejachka, Dupnat Kamen, Ploca and Gjermovski Bachila. Out of these locations, we would highlight the locations of Jelak and Leshnica as ideal places for the development of adventure tourism in general and practicing outdoor activities.

Out of the mountain peaks in this area the most dominant is the highest peak of Shar Planina, **Titov Vrv** with an altitude of 2.747 meters. Around it are the two peaks that are at an altitude above 2700 meters, Bagrdan and Mal Turchin (Little Turk). The ridge bordering Kosovo is characterized by the peaks



Klech, Skaklo, Karanikola, Vrtop, Kobilica and Crn Vrv. The populated places belonging to the mountain massif of Shara are divided in 13 villages. Some of these villages have excellent positions and great preconditions for the development of rural tourism. Here we would point out

Bozovce, Veshala, Vejce, Brodec, Lisec, Gjermo and Setole. The culturaly historical monuments we can highlight are Tetovo Kale, Painted Mosque, Turkish Bath, Arabati Baba Tekje and the churches St.Nikola and St.Cyril and Methodius. The city of Tetovo, as the main economic operator of the municipality and the region, has a main role in the development of tourism in the region, not only for the Macedonian side, but for both sides. As a multi-ethnic city, Tetovo is one of the oldest cities in the Republic of North Macedonia, in which, through history many cultures based on the tradition of the civil society living in this region have intertwined.



The **Municipality of Bogovinje**, when considering the area of rural/mountain tourism, is characterised by the biggest glacial lake on the Shar Mountain-Bogovinjsko Lake. Bogovinjsko Lake is located at an height of 1960 meters in the cirque between the Bristavec Peak and the plateau Golema Smreka. The lake covers an area of 66.000 square meters, and its depth is 5-6 m³. Besides this lake, we can also point out the Crno i Belo Lake (Black and White Lake). The canyon of the river Bogovinjska is one of the most attractive canyons for recreational fishing. The several private facilities in the municipality have the potential for future development of mountain and eco tourism. The mountain locations we can draw attention to are the peaks Rudoka, Bristavec, Trapeznica and Dzinibeg, the valley Slapska, the River Uliverichka and the plateaus Golema and Mala smreka (Big and Small spruce). Out of the populated places which can be developed in the future in regards to eco tourism, the ones with the most potential are the villages Gorno Palchishte, Jelovjane, Urvich, Novo Selo and Selce Kech.



The **Municipality of Vrapchishte** is one of those characterized by a mountainous terrain which is the least accessible. Still, these terrains have their own importance and value characterized by untouched nature and attractive sites. The locations that can be highlighted are the valley of the River Mazdracha, the second valley on Shar Mountain, the peaks Golema and Mala Vraca (Big and Small Vraca), the peak of Radika and Rasengjul and the locality Tiha Voda (Quiet Water). The inhabited places that are important for this region, and have the potential and possibility for development of eco tourism are Pozharane, Vranjovce and Debreshe.



The **Municipality of Gostivar** is at the southernmost part of the teritorry of the Shar Mountain which borders the national park "Mavrovo". Characteristic spots for this municipality are the plateaus above Ramen Kamen, Mengulova Kula (Mengulova Tower), the pastures with magnificent views towards the valley of Mazdracha and the peaks of Vraca. The settlements that already function in the direction of development of mountain tourism are the villages of Gorno and Dolno Jelovce (Upper and Lower Jelovce). In this part there are also two mountain huts.

³Krivokapich Dushan, Shar Mountain-Turistichko geografski prikaz predela I naroda, Turistichka Shtampa, Beograd 1969, page.144

The Mountain hut "Sharski Vodi"

(Shar Waters) and "Shari" are located at an altitude of 1350 meters, and are placed on the channel Sharski Vodi (Sharski Waters). The Sharski Vodi channel itself signifies as tourist attraction. The channel is actually a hydro system, which collects all the mountain waters and rivers on Shar Mountain starting from the village of Jelovjane up to Duf and



collects them to the Mavrovo Lake, with which Mavrovo Lake is supplied with water. This system was built in the late fifties of the last century. Along the channel itself, which is at a height of 1400 to 1300 meters, an unpaved road has been made, which is quite attractive for mountain biking. At the foot of Shar Mountain, in the Municipality of Gostivar, the most characteristic places are the springs of the river Vardar and the village Vrutok. This tourist attraction has been "utilized" by the locals and many fishponds have been constructed which are visited by a large number of tourists. The town of Gostivar, as an urban environment in this municipality, has been characterized by a community of Macedonians, Turks, Albanians, Roma and other nationalities for centuries. In the middle ages the city was visited by many travellers from all over, and they were very well welcomed by the hospitable hosts that owned numerous taverns. In this city, since among the travellers there were a lot of merchants, they began settling down in this city and that is how the name of the city was created – Gostivar (gosti means guests). Of the cultural and historical monuments we are pointing out: the **Clock Tower**, the Clock Mosque, the church St.Dimitrija and the cathedral "Uspenie na Presveta Bogorodica" (Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God).



Economic Region South - Kosovo

Kosovo legally is not divided into regions. However, EU and other donors use regional approach in their support activities. Economic Region South lies in the South-Western part of Kosovo. It borders Albania to the West, Republic of North Macedonia to the Southeast and the municipalities of Gjakova to the Northwest, Shtime to the Northeast and Shterpce to the East. The region has a total area of 2031 km² (18.66% of the territory of Kosovo) and consists of 6 municipalities: **Prizren, Dragash, Suhareka, Malisheva, Rahovec and Mamusha**, that differ significantly in size - from the largest one of 640 km² (Prizren) to the smallest one of 12.5 km² (Mamusha) with the remaining four municipalities of an average size (280- 430 km²). It is estimated that the current population count of the Economic Region South is about 513.000 inhabitants which constitutes about 24% of the population of Kosovo. The ethnic structure of the Region's population is mixed, where the Kosovar Albanians constitute over 88,5% (454.005 individuals) of the population. The other main ethnicities present in the region are of Bosniak and Gorani ethnicity with the share of 8% (41.040 individuals), ethnic Turks with 1,8% share (9.234 individuals), ethnic Roma-Ashkali-Egyptian community with 1,3% (6.669 individuals) and ethnic Serbs with 0,4% (2.052 individuals) as a share of the whole population.⁴

In this region the topography is of a mixed type and includes high mountains, rolling hills, valleys and plains.

The land elevation ranges from about 400 to 2.750 meters across the mountain areas (peaks of the Sharri Mountains). On the mountains there are extensive forestlands and some natural grazing lands with the abundance of wild animal life and vegetation.

While the climate features of the region are dominated by those that are characteristic to the mid-continental climate (with cold winters and hot summers), there is also a significant influence of milder Mediterranean climate. The maximum temperatures during the summer season reach an average of 24.6°C while the lowest temperatures in January average -10°C. The total rainfall ranges from 511 mm to 1.108 mm per year. The climate conditions in combination with relatively good soils make a good base for developing agriculture. The hills with optimal sun exposure make it possible to set up quality vineyards.

The region is considered to have adequate supply of water. None of the rivers is big enough to organize navigation i.e. river transportation for commercial use, but they could be used for tourism purposes or fishing. Majority of smaller rivers and streams join the Drini i Bardhe River, which has the length of 122 km and is located in the Western part of the region. This makes it possible to irrigate good portion of arable land. Consequently, a considerable part of agricultural land in the region, over 12.500 hectares, is covered by irrigation systems. This compares with a total of about

⁴ <http://ask.rks-gov.net>

55.000 hectares under irrigation in the entire Kosovo (about 23%). Kosovo has a nominal projected capacity for irrigation of 72.440 ha. Significant portion of that untapped potential is believed to be in the Economic Region South.

Large proportion of land with good quality soils combined with possibilities of further progress in irrigation (Economic Region South already has higher than the average area for Kosovo of irrigated land) makes the region appropriate for integrated agricultural development. Availability of graze land creates an opportunity for expanding livestock production and makes it feasible to improve the technology and livestock quality. Good soils, adequate exposure combined with favorable climate conditions make the region suitable for viticulture.

Unparalleled regional geographic position, richness of natural endowments, numerous examples of viticulture cultural and historic heritage, as well as vibrant folklore, make Region South an ideal place for sustainable tourism development. Some of the assets such as proximity of transit routes and presence of the mountains suitable for winter sports as well as camping and hiking for weekends are already to some extent being taken advantage of. The tourism-related business activities are already providing a good source for income for local population and business people.

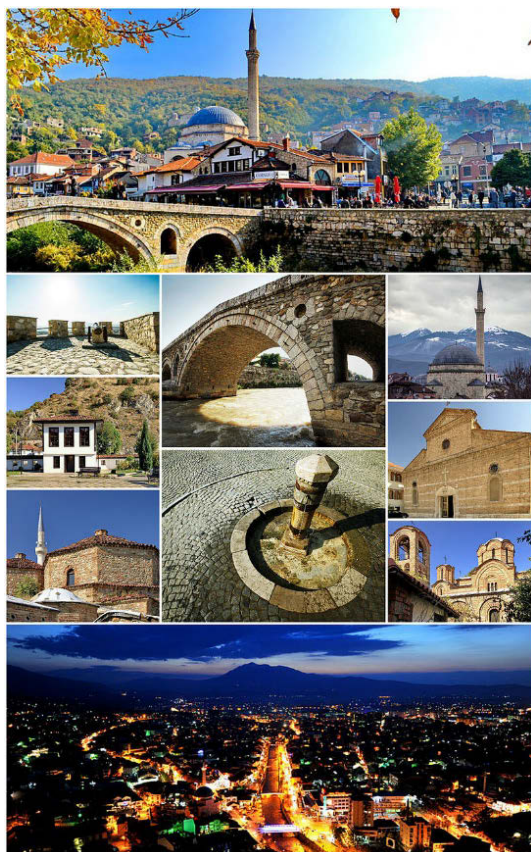
Within the Sharri Mountain Range, reaching the heights of up to 2750 m, there are 16 mountain lakes. Major parts of this area are under protection and are intended to be used primarily for the purposes of tourism development. Sharri Mountains have hundreds of meters of skiing tracks which are not fully taken advantage of but they present big potential for further development of winter tourism. Mountains of Koritnik and Pashtrik also present great natural potential for development of mountain tourism. The Mirusha Gorge is a protected natural reserve because of its scenic string of pools and waterfalls as well as high plant diversity (more than 800 different species). You can find several rare plants (some are endemic in Kosova) and protected animals, such as land turtles and snakes (e.g. Vipera amodytes). The Mirusha River has carved a 10 kilometre long canyon near the convergence with the Drini i Bardhe River and created 16 river lakes with waterfalls in between them. The highest waterfall, between the lake 8 and 9, is 21 meters high. The biggest lake (55 m X 45 m) is the last one with a depth of 5 meters.

Most of the municipalities of the region are part of or in proximity of Sharr Mountains. Two of the municipalities of the region, Dragash and Prizren, have included the parts of Shar Mountain in the developed strategies for local economic development, as future potential spots for mountain tourism. Depending on the territory of the municipalities that encompass Shar Mountain and according to the strategies they have developed, the places for future development of rural/mountain tourism can be defined.

The southernmost municipality of Kosovo, **Municipality of Dragash** is an oasis of untouched natural beauty and traditional villages sandwiched between the borders of North Macedonia and Albania. Largely ignored by the Yugoslavian Government, the area never received development money for tourism despite its wealth of flora, fauna and cultural traditions. Luckily, this also spared the region from the communist



era concrete hotels and restaurants that mark similar regions in Kosovo. The undeveloped mountain range of the Sharr Mountains is an ideal location for countless outdoor adventures, family excursions and a taste of traditional Kosovo where life marches to the traditional rhythms of nature. Old trade routes to North Macedonia and Albania, still used by local farmers for sheepherding and transporting crops, are easily accessible. The area boasts a wide range of hiking skill levels between basic day hiking and advanced trekking for the more experienced adventurer. you can spend an afternoon hiking, collecting edible mushrooms, horseback riding, mountain biking, backcountry skiing, and or just relaxing in idyllic picnic areas by crystal clear cold mountain rivers. The area is blessed with seasonal varieties of natural foods, cultural festivals, and is one of Kosovo's most diverse wildlife areas. Visitors can pick blueberries along mountainsides, enjoy bird watching for species such as the Eurasian Woodcock, the Green Woodpecker, and the Eurasian tree sparrow, or hike through wild patches of Juniper and Rosa canina (rose hip). Local cheeses are a delicacy in the region as is the fresh mouth- watering slow cooked lamb and small- scale natural honey production. Dragash is mainly mountainous but with distinct natural features in three areas. The Opoja valley in the northern area has a heart of flat agricultural land surrounded by mountains and forest ideal for mushroom picking. The central area around Dragash town is more mountainous with deep river valleys and abundant forests. The southern part of Dragash is striking in its almost complete lack of trees, towering mountains, and prevalent alpine fields. The municipality has 36 villages, including Dragash, which share a mixed cultural diversity of Albanian, Gorani, Bosnian, and even remnants of the Turkish era. The small villages, lined with traditional Ottoman era stone houses, are a breath of fresh air away from the large cities that dominate modern life.



Municipality of Prizren is located centrally in the southwestern part of Kosovo. Its neighbors include Albania in the west, North Macedonia in the southeast, Municipality of Gjakova in the northwest, Municipality of Rahovec in the north, Municipality of Suhareka/Suvareka in the northeast, Municipality of Shterpce in the east and Municipality of Dragash in the south. It is made from 73 cadastral regions with a total area of 640 km² (which constitutes 5.94 % of the Kosovo territory). Its average altitude is between 412 m and 500 m, whereas the mountainous (Sharr Mountain) sections are located as high as 2000 m. The climate is regarded to be of Mediterranean character. The area around Prizren, particularly to the east and southwest is also picturesque. Heading east from town toward the old Yugoslav ski resort of Brezovica the road takes you through the Zhupa

National Park valley. To the southwest, toward the Albanian border the landscape is also dramatic. Winter and summer tourism continue to present a real perspective for this municipality. Its natural endowments – the Sharr Mountains, particularly around the Prevalac Pass and its ski areas suitable for beginners and intermediate skiers, City of Prizren rich in history and cultural life, just to name a few. In Prizren, there are three natural reserves as, Maja e Arnetit, Oshljaku and Pisha e Madhe which are important with their plant reserves of endemic-relict specie Bosnian Pine (*Pinus Heldreichii*). Prizren is one of the fortunate locations in terms of amount of water resources. The most important and longest river in Prizren is Drini I Bardhe River (111 km). It enters Prizren from the north and continues towards the southwest to Albania and flows into the Adriatic Sea. The river forms a small lake inside the borders of Dobrushta Village. The river named Lumbardhi with 35 km length flows through Zhupa Valley and continues through Prizren city center. Another important river in Prizren is Toplluha River which is 37 km long. The city has always been a crossroad of cultures and different ethnic groups and therefore Prizren reflects a remarkable history of the Kosovo Territory. There are numerous significant monumental buildings inherited from different civilizations, especially from the Ottoman era, when the city gained importance as a prosperous trade city owing to its strategic position. There are 291 cultural monuments and sites in the Prizren Municipality, which are listed by the Institute for Protection of Monuments (2009). Prizren town has the most quantity and variety of monuments and sites which represent historical background of its territory. As the architectural monument classification, there are 50 public buildings in the use and /or ownership of public or state parties in the Prizren

Municipality. The inventory of 2002-2003 listed over 500 monuments of heritage, and the database includes 383 architectural and 13 movable monuments. 168 of them are sacral, 193 profane and 22 utilitarian.



The **Municipality of Štrpce/Shtërpçë** is located in the south- eastern part of Kosovo covering an area of approximately 247 km² and includes Štrpce/Shtërpçë town and 16 villages. The most well-known village is Brezovica which includes a ski resort. Brezovica ski resort was officially open in 1954 though the road and the ski lifts were built later on. The resort used to be very popular for the region, hosting

different ski competitions and serving as an alternative site for the Olympic Games held in Sarajevo in 1984. Nowadays there are only three ski-lift facilities functioning in the winter. The facilities are old and there haven't been done any serious renovation work, however, the place still attracts many tourists mainly from Kosovo and Albania in the winter weekends. The company operating the ski lifts also owns the hotel Molika (meaning Macedonian pine), the Narcis and Breza hotel in the village and Mala Brvnara restaurant on the road to the ski resort. The village of Sevce is one of the bigger villages in the municipality of Štrpce with 1400 inhabitants. It is located at the foot of Ošljak/Oshlak peak where the Lepenac/Lepenc River has its source. Sevce is one of the oldest settlements in the region. It is also facing isolation, since public transport exists only during the school year. According to the 2011 Kosovo Population and Housing Census, the total population of the municipality is 6,949. Štrpce/Shtërpçë has five (5) mosques, all of which are in use and 16 Serbian Orthodox churches, most of them in use. Five (5) Serbian Orthodox churches in the municipality are listed as Special Protective Zones, the Church of St. Nicholas in Štrpce/Shtërpçë town, the Church of St. Theodore in Biti e Poshtme/Donja Bitinja village, the Church of St. Nicholas in Gotovushë/Gotovuša village, the Church of the Holy Virgin in Gotovushë/Gotovuša village, and the Church of St. George in Biti e Epërme/Gornja Bitinja village. A total of ten (10) cultural heritage sites (four (4) archaeological and six (6) architectural) in Štrpce/Shtërpçë municipality are included in the Ministry of Culture Youth and Sport list of sites under permanent/temporary protection.

The Shar Mountain

General information about the natural values of Shar Mountain.⁵

The Shar Mountain is located in the northwestern part of the Republic of North Macedonia. The massif extends in the northeast - west - southwest with a length of 80 km (measured by ridges) with an area of 1600 km² and an average elevation of 2200 m. It begins with the Lepenec River and the peak of Ljuboten (2499m), and ends with Morava (2147m) more precisely at the mouth of the Mavrovska River and the Mavrovo Lake.

The Shar Mountain massif is a young mountain range, with a mountainous climate characterized by cold winters and pleasant summers. The average winter temperature is -1.5°C, and during the summer is 17°C. The thickness of the snow cover on average is 1m with a duration of four months at a height above 1300 m. The winds that blow most often are from the northwest direction.

The massif is characterized by a rich flora and fauna. It is abundant in high mountain pastures of 45000 hectares, and high-stemmed coniferous forests, of which the most common are the fir and spruce, while in the lower parts the beech and chestnut forests are present, which can reach a



height of 1700m (10000 hectares). Over 200 endemic plants are found on Shara, which is the highest percentage of endemism in Republic of North Macedonia. The representation of the fauna is also grand, with over 44 species of which we distinguish: lynx, deer, chamois, bear and wild boar. Regarding birds, many species of eagles, falcons and hawks are present. The most widely known is the Sharplaninec (which is loosely translated as dog of the Shar Mountains) which is an endemic species and a pride of Shar Mountain and Republic of North Macedonia. A distinguishable characteristic of the Shar Mountain are the so called Eyes of Shar Mountain which are in fact a large number of glacial lakes. There are 25 permanent, 14 temporary and 150 puddles. The water potential of this massif is enormous and includes over 200 sources of pure spring water. In terms of ore resources, we can find manganese, iron and chromium ores, molybdenum, copper and other minerals.

⁵Group of authors, "[Natural values of Shar Planina Mt.](#)", Macedonian Ecological Society, Skopje 2010

Shar Planina has a high number of peaks with a height above 2200 m. Ranging from the northwestern side of the mountain some of those are: Ljuboten (2499m), Livadica (2497m), Piribeg (2524m), Chaushica (2651m), Bistrica (2571m), Crn Vrv (2585m), Kobilica (2528m), Vrtop (2555m), Karanikola (2409m), Skakalo (2493m) which descend through Babaasanica into the most beautiful and attractive part of this massif, the area around Leshnica (1450m). From this point it climbs to the highest point of Shara where the highest peak is located, Titov Vrv (2747m). Around this peak there are several other peaks: Ceripashina(2525m), Sin Vrv (2550m), Kazani (2567m), Bakardan (2704m) and Mal Turchin (2702m), which continue towards Dzinibeg (2610m), Trapezanica (2590m), Borislaec (2675m), Rudoka (2658m), Golema Vraca (2582m), Vrv of Radika (2405m), Rasengul (2386m), Lera (2194m) and Morava (2147m) which gradually descends.

Geology⁶

According to the geological composition and according to the general geographical characteristics, Shar Mountain can be divided into three parts that are not uniform:

- Northeastern segment (from the valley of the river Bistrica to the top Ljuboten).
- Central segment (from the Mazdracha valley, through the Pena valley, to the valley of the Bistrica River).
- The southernmost segment (from the valley of the river Mazdracha to the north, to the Nichpur Mountain and Kozha to the south)

Geomorphology⁷

The relief of the mountain is divided in several relief forms:

- Polygenetic grounds-those are the oldest relief forms represented in the form of rolling plateaus
- Dominant mountain peaks - the Shar Mountain is characterized by a large number of peaks that reach over 2000m above sea level, and a number of peaks over 2500m above sea level
- Rock cliffs - The most remarkable ones are at Leshnica, on the right valley side of the River Pena
- Fluvial relief - typical for this mountain are many watercourses which form deep dales and river gorges
- Karst relief - Due to the small amount of carbonate surfaces, the karst relief isn't that prominent on this mountain

⁶Group of authors (footnote 4)

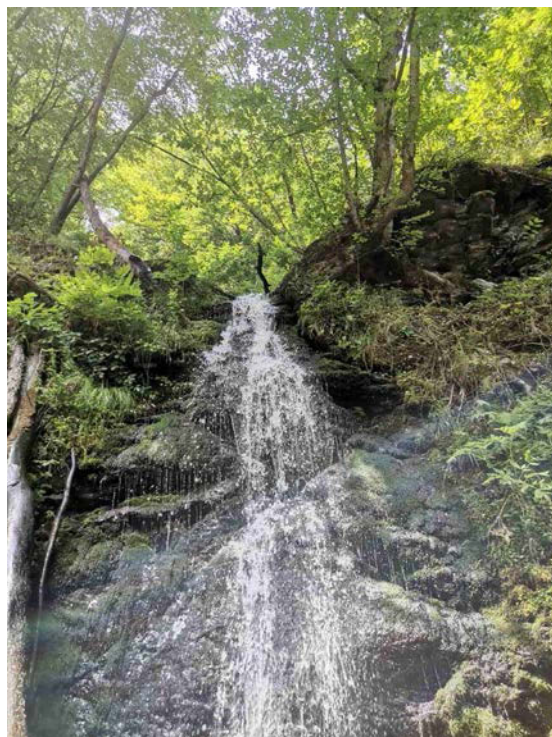
⁷Group of authors (footnote 4)

- Glacial relief - During the last glaciation, glaciers went down towards the east, southeast, north and northeast of the mountain which left a number of cirques.
- Periglacial relief - Characteristic forms for this relief are encountered on Rudoka, Trapeznica, in the highest parts of the river basin of Pena, as well as in the spring part of the river Bogovinska.

Hydrology⁸

The water resources of Shar Planina are made up of many springs, steep mountain streams and a lot of glacial lakes.

- The springs of the Shar Mountain appear at the foot of the taluses (screes), rubbles, rock cuttings, at bare and grassy slopes and elsewhere. There are several hundred springs, of which about 90 are on the side of the Republic of North Macedonia.
- Watercourses - Over a hundred smaller or larger watercourses flow from the Shar Mountain to Polog. The springs of most of the major watercourses reach a high altitude over 2,400 m. Most are in the form of spring rills, composed of a network of smaller streams.



They are flowing in several main branches from which the river itself originates. One of the most developed is the rill of the Vratnicka Reka. Its two branches that flow to the Ljubotenska River are formed of 48 symmetrically branched rills. Almost all rivers on the Shara Mountain belong to the watershed of the river Vardar, and the larger ones flow into it.



- Glacial lakes - There are about 30 lakes on the part of the mountain that is on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia, of which 21 are permanent. The most important lakes are: Livadichko Lake, Jazhinachko Lake, Golemo Lake, Gorno Dobroshko, Dolno Dobroshko Lake, Kranikolichko

⁸Group of authors (footnote 4)

Lake, Krivoshijsko Lake, Belo Lake, Bogovinsko Lake and Crno Lake. The Dedelbeshko Lake and Ler Lake are the last lakes in the southern part of the ridge of the Shara Mountain. They represent the final succession stadium of the transformation of glacial lakes into a marsh ecosystem. In addition to the glacial lakes, a large number of ponds are found on Shar Planina, of which the two Chelepinski ponds (2,315 m.a.s.l.) are known, the Rudochki ponds (2,170 m.a.s.l.) Fudanski ponds (2.100-2.150 m.a.s.l.) and Vrachanski ponds (1.975 m.a.s.l.).

Climate⁹

There is a large difference in height between the foothills of the Shar Mountain (Polog) and the highest peaks, which is why there is a change in the basic climate types and a considerable variation of the average climate parameters within one climate type. From the foot to the peaks, the continental climate is replaced by a colder mountain climate. At each altitude by 100m, the temperature of Shar Planina drops by 0.5°C. Precipitation increases together with the height increase up to 2,200 m, after which it begins to decline.

The average annual temperature at the foot of the Shara Mountain ranges between 10.5 and 11°C. The climate of Popova Shapka (1750 m.a.s.l.) is characterized by a low average temperature of 4.6°C. Popova Sapka is characterized by heavy rainfall. It usually falls around 1100 mm, but in some years this amount is over 1500 mm. Permanent snow cover occurs from December to March. The maximum height of the snow cover is 160 cm, and on the higher terrains it can be up to 200 cm.

Flora¹⁰

The Shar Mountain flora is extremely rich and, according to the current data, it has over 2000 species of vascular plants, which is more than half of all of North Macedonia. Shar Mountain is one of the most important Balkan and European centers of highland endemism that includes relict, endemorelict and endemic species. On Shar Mountain there are around 200 endemic and subendemic plant taxa (types, subspecies and varieties).



Stenendemic orophytes (mountain species) having tertiary, in rare cases glacial age; tertiary orophytes (mountainous species with tertiary age), which are mostly stenodendemic or

⁹Group of authors (footnote 4)

¹⁰Group of authors (footnote 4)

subendemic species; glacial species with arctic-alpine distribution (ice age species), which are very rare species of the Balkan Peninsula.

Fauna¹¹

The fauna of Shar Planina hasn't been quite as thoroughly explored as the flora despite the exceptional values it possesses.

- Invertebrates - The fauna of day-flying butterflies is represented by 167 species, which consists 80% of the fauna of the day-flying butterflies of Republic of North Macedonia. Endemic daily butterflies are not found on Shar Mountain. Rare butterfly species are important in terms of biodiversity preservation. The ground beetles (carabidae) are representatives of the largest group of organisms - the beetles (Coleoptera). There are about 140 types of ground beetles on Shar Mountain. According to the number of species, Shar Mountain is one of the richest mountains with ground beetles in Republic of North Macedonia, and according to the number of endemic species and relics, Shar Mountain is one of the most important mountains on the Balkan Peninsula along with Prokletije, Pirin and Rila. The grasshoppers have been scarcely studied. So far, 40 species have been identified which is less than half of the actual number. The fauna of terrestrial snails on Shar Mountain is consisted of 49 species.
- Vertebrate - The fish on Shar Mountain haven't been completely studied. So far, it is known that in the mountain streams and rivers there are the stream trouts (*Salmo trutta*), the Mediterranean Black Barbel (*Barbus meridionalis petenyi*) and the gudgeon (*Gobio gobio*). The fauna of the amphibians (batrachofauna) on Shar Planina is extremely rich. There are 12 present of the 15 species in Republic of North Macedonia. The fauna of reptiles (herpetofauna) is also present on this massif. There are 17 species of reptiles registered, which is almost half of the total number in Republic of North Macedonia. The Ursini's viper is a globally endangered species which is encountered on the red list of threatened species in Europe, and here it has the status of strictly protected species.

The ornitofauna (bird fauna) on this mountain is relatively scarce, having in mind the size and the amounts of habitats. It is estimated that on Shar Mountain at least 130 species of birds can be found. Among them, the most numerous are the nesting birds, and the most interesting is the fauna of birds that can be found at open high-mountainous terrains, because of the presence of alpine species. Out of the vultures, today we can spot the Giffon Vulture- white-headed eagle (*Gyps fulvus*), which doesn't nestle on Shar, but comes during the summer period in search of food. The number of other raptors has also decreased, thus the Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), can be seen in only few pairs. There are 45 species of mammals registered on this mountain, of 78 registered in Republic of North Macedonia

¹¹Group of authors (footnote 4)



endangered sub species encountered in Republic of North Macedonia with an estimated population of less than 60 adult specimens on the Balkans. The southern parts of Shar are still a stronghold for this endangered animal.

Of great importance for preservation are also the Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos*) and the Chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra balcanica*). From ungulates (hoofs animals), the most important for protection is the Chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra balcanica*).

in total. Among them, five are on the red list of threatened species, of which three are classified as endangered. The most endangered one is the Balkan snow vole - Balkan pole (*Dinaromys bogdanovi*), classified as endangered species which inhabits the high-mountain rocky sides, whereas the balkan lynx is the most



Agrobiodiversity¹²



The significant mark of Shar Mountain is its great diversity of wild species of plants, fungi and animals. However, this mountain is also known for the diversity of domestic animals and plants, and a specific symbol for this region is the local breed of dog - sharplaninec and the sheep sharplaninka.

The Sharplaninec is a shepherd dog breed with an instinct for protection of flocks of sheep. For the first time this race was mentioned in the 30's of the last century, and in 1957 it was registered as a sharplaninec in the World Canine Federation (from 1939 to 1957, it was registered as an Ilyrian shepherd).

¹²Group of authors (footnote 4)

Fungi¹³

On the Shar Mountain a total of 365 species of fungi have been discovered among which 210 are lignicolous and the rest are terricolous.

Cultural heritage in the region of Sub-Shar Mountain / Polog

Apart from natural attractions, the region is rich with historical artifacts located all over the region. Of particular importance is the Tetovo Menada, but also the historical monuments from the Ottoman period, especially in the region of Tetovo, such as **Arabati Baba Tekke**, the Painted Mosque, the Turkish Bath, several fortresses, several more important churches and monasteries, especially the **Leshok Monastery**.



Tetovo is home to the Cultural center, "Ilo Antevski-Smok", which was built on the foundations of the Charshiska Mosque in 1975. In this center, the culture of all nationalities that live here is developing in parallel, through various activities: music, drama, literature, etc. Within the cultural center there is a library that has about 30,000 books. The mixed youth choir, the female choir, the male choir and various

cultural and artistic associations, including "Ilo Antevski Smok" and "Xheladin Zeqiri", also act there. As part of the dramatic activities, there is a drama studio for children, young and old. Also, various art galleries are organized here. From the literary activities there are the literary clubs "Literary Club 94" and "Kiril Pejcinovic" who organize various promotions of books, literary books by reading the works of our authors from the past, publishing contests for young literary artists, etc. As a part of the dramatic activities, there is a drama studio for children, youth and adults. Also, various art galleries are organized here. From the literary activities there are literary clubs "Literary Club94" and "Kiril Pejcinovic" which organize various promotions of books, literary nights

¹³Group of authors (footnote 4)

by reading the works of our authors from the past, publishing contests for young literary artists, etc.

In Gostivar, such activities are performed in the Cultural Center "ASNOM" behind which is immediately located the library "Vuk Karadzic". The sights that can be seen in Gostivar are the Gostivar Clock Tower, the Gostivar Clock Mosque with the Madrasa, the Church of St. Dimitrija and the cathedral Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God.

The historical sites in the smaller settlements in the sub-Shara region do not diminish the value of the region. The ancient "Legen Town" near the villag Jedoarce, Leshko and Orashko Fortresses, the places of interest in most villages at the foot of the mountain dating from the Early Christian period, and today are used as picnic places, are significant parts of the chain that needs to be created for the future development of mountain tourism.

An interesting cultural point of interest in the sub-Shara region is "The Smallest Ethnological Museum in the World" located in the village Dzepcishte.

In the region there are several festivals and cultural manifestations of local and regional character. Each of the municipalities in the region has its own festival and events related to religious holidays, traditions and ethnographic characteristics. Of a regional character, the most important activities that are organized are the music festivals: Shari kendon (Shara sings), a manifestation where the folklore is presented from various places where the Albanian people live; "Tetovski folk filigrani" that are organized in the Leshok Monastery; "TEHO" Tetovo choral responses an international competition for choral singing, "Bletezat" and "Tetovski jabolchinja" (Tetovo apples) - children's music festivals and many others.

Sport events, and in particular we will mention the events organized on the mountain, also have a significant role in the development of mountain tourism in the cross-border region. Out of the mountaineering events, the most significant is the traditional ascent to the highest peak of Shar Mountain, Titov Vrv. An event that is organized every year on the last weekend of May, and dates back to 1980. The characteristic of this event is that during the organization, guests arrive from the wider Balkan region, and a large number of organizations from the field of mountaineering with a total number of climbers which is on average of 1000 climbers at the top. The "Sharski Vode" event, which is a cycling race of 80 km and takes place on the "Sharski Vode Kanal" (Shar Water Channel), we note among the most important sporting events that are organized in the region. The Paragliding Cup "Menada" is an event that refers to a paragliding competition in various disciplines. The most significant event, organized in the region, which dates back to 1947 and represents the oldest ski event in Republic of North Macedonia is the Sharplanina Cup. The Sharplanina Cup is a skiing competition in two disciplines, a slalom and a giant slalom, and it is organized on the ski slopes of Popova Shapka. This event due to organizational shortcomings is not organized every year. In all the aforementioned events, apart from the direct participation of

competitors, climbers and organizers, visitors are an important factor in the local economic development for the regions as the role of indirect participants.

Cultural heritage in the region of Shar Mountain - South Economic Region Kosovo

Apart from natural attractions, the region is rich with historical artifacts located all over the south economic region. The remains of the Široko complex are located near Mushtisht. The complex originates from the period between the 10th and the 7th century BC, but also has medieval remnants. In Roman period, the mountain was a tripoint between the provinces of Dalmatia, Moesia and Macedonia. The route of an ancient road crossed the *Scardus* from 169 BC. The road was later named Velji ("Great") or Prizren road. Lisinski road was built. Remnants of the fort on the Kradište hill, near Prizren, dates from the 2nd to the 6th century and testifies the change of civilizations in this region: it started in the pre-Roman period, then became a Roman town and later a Byzantine one. Locality of Ravna Gora, predating the 6th century, where Slavs later cremated their dead, is situated in the area. Medieval military complex of Petric Fortress, which consists of two fortresses, Little Petric and Great Petric, is also preserved. Remains of the Višegrad Fort, older part of the Prizren Fortress, are located in the gorge of the Bistrica River. There are 45 Serbian Orthodox Monasteries on the slopes of the mountain, dating from the 12th to the 16th century. Church of the Dormition of the Mother of God in the village of Gotovusa was built in 16th century. It was destroyed later and rebuilt in the second half of the 19th century. During the works in churchyard in the 2010s a floor mosaic was discovered from the much older church from the Byzantine period. There are numerous mosques around town, but the largest, dominating the town center is the **Mosque of Sinan Pasha** which is one of the most important monuments from the time of Ottoman Empire in this territory. According to the inscription inside the mosque Sofi Sinan Pasha, built it for his co-citizens, on hijri year 1024 (1615), using the building material from the Holy Archangels Monastery, which the Ottomans demolished and tore to the ground the same year. **Bajrakli Mosque** - the 14th century Mosque of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, can be reached on the first left street in front of the Hamam. Bajrakli mosque dates from 1566 and is possibly the most beautiful mosque in Prizren with ornate wood work and detailed blue-and-white paintings.



The **Hammam** (Turkish Baths) of Prizren is an early Ottoman-era monument in which oriental and local traditions combine. It was built in the heart of the city in 1563/4 by Gazi Mehmet Pasha, at the time when he was also building the nearby mosque. The hammam has two large and nine small domes and is separated into men's and women's sections. As one of the most precious hammams in South-East Europe, it embodies special architectural, historical, cultural and social values. Integrated for centuries in the lives of the citizens, it has become a symbol for the spiritual and cultural heritage of Prizren and its region. The building functioned as a hammam until 1944. It then served for cheese production, as a warehouse, and later the entrance area was used for cultural events. In state protection since 1954, the hammam was repaired and maintained until 1981 when it was left at the mercy of time. **Shadervan** is the main square and a gathering point in the evenings and is surrounded by cafes, bars, restaurants and ice cream parlours. During the day this is an excellent place to sit and have a coffee or have lunch and watch the town go about its business. In August the town hosts the **Dokufest International Documentary and Short Film Festival** www.dokufest.com. During the Festival the town is full of people and various parties go late at night in the bars.

Ethnology - Polog Region

The Polog region is characterized by a population of several ethnic communities living and still living on its territory. The largest ethnic communities in this region are Macedonians and Albanians, and besides them, a large part of the population is also members of the Turkish, Roma and Serbian communities. Besides the rich and varied culture due to the different nationalities of this region, religion is also an important part of the history and the development of the people living in this region. Most of the members of the population in this region are Muslims, and the rest are members of the Christian faith.

The importance of this segment in the study is in the direction of the development of mountain tourism, because the richness of culture translated into traditional values that are still nurtured in rural settlements is of great importance for attracting tourists. Different ethnicities have different traditions that at the end comes down to an equal values. Traditional costumes, the preparation of traditional food, the making of handicrafts, music and musical instruments, games, dances and customs of the Christian and Muslim populations are different, but still they have the same goal.

The preparation and tasting of traditional food in a Muslim and Christian family is something that every tourist would try during a visit to the region. Familiarization with traditional games, dances, customs, listening to diversity in music, making traditional instruments, then reviewing the practicality of clothes and traditional costumes and of course making handicrafts are activities that can be offered as part of the overall offer of the cross-border region on the tourism market.

Ethnology/ South Economic Region Kosovo

It is estimated that the current population count of the Economic Region South is about 513.000 inhabitants which constitutes about 24% of the population of Kosovo. The trend for the population in the region is growing. While the region covers less than 19% of the territory of Kosovo, the population density is therefore higher than average.

Municipalities in the Region differ significantly in population density, with Municipalities of Mamusha and Prizren being the most densely populated (respectively 458 persons/km² and 375 persons/km²) and Malisheva being the most sparsely populated (212 persons/km²).

The ethnic structure of the Region's population is mixed where the Kosovar Albanians constitute over 88,5% (454.005 individuals) of the population. The other main ethnicities present in the Regions are of Bosniak and Gorani ethnicity with the share of 8% (41.040 individuals), ethnic Turks with 1,8% share (9.234 individuals), ethnic Roma-Ashkali-Egyptian community with 1,3% (6.669 individuals) and ethnic Serbs with 0,4% (2.052 individuals) share of the population.

Demographic Data. Region South has a population that can be characterized as young. A study shows that over 37% of the population is under the age of 18. This is related to the average size of the households and the average number of children in the household which in this Region are both much higher than the same figures for the entire Kosovo.

Communication – Economic Polog Region

Two main international communication points in the Republic of North Macedonia are the International Airport Skopje and the Ohrid Airport.

The distance of the International Airport Skopje to the capital Skopje is approximately 23 km, and can be reached by bus or taxi to Skopje. The capital Skopje is approximately 45 km from the city of Tetovo and 66 km from the city of Gostivar, with which there are regular bus lines for transportation. Besides the connection with Tetovo, the capital can be directly reached to other municipalities and villages that belong to those municipalities (for which there are no regular bus lines, but there is a road that connects from the highway Skopje-Tetovo directly to the local roads to these villages). Often, there is also organized van transport for certain villages and municipalities.

From Ohrid airport, cities of Gostivar and Tetovo can be reached by direct regular bus lines or taxi transport, and is approximately 100 kilometers away from both cities.

From the city of Tetovo to all the villages in the surroundings can be reached through the local roads that lead to them, for which there is a combination of transport, the possibility of transportation by taxi, and normally with their own vehicle. Some villages also have regular bus lines. The villages Bogovinje and Jegunovce are about 16 km away from the town, the village of Tearce is 11 km away from Tetovo. For mountain villages, which are the starting point for many mountain tours, there is also a combi-transport from the city, and can be reached by taxi or own vehicle. The mountain villages are at a distance of 10 km (Vejce) to 25 km (Bozovce, Veshala) from the city of Tetovo.

From the city of Gostivar to the local villages and the municipalities in the region, can be accessed by local roads for which there is also organized van transport, and to some villages there are regular bus lines. The municipality of Vrapciste is at a distance of 19 km, the Municipality of Bogovinje 16 km from the city.

To the popular ski centers Popova Shapka and to the national park Mavrovo, there is a local road connected from Tetovo and Gostivar. The ski center Popova Shapka is 20 km away from Tetovo, for which it has a regular bus line, and is accessible by taxi. The Mavrovo National Park is at a distance of 35 km from the city of Gostivar. There are direct bus routes to the National Park from other cities, including the capital of Skopje, van-transport, taxi transport.

Communication / Economic Region South Kosovo

Region South is characterized by a developed network of local, regional and main roads, but the majority of them are in relatively poor condition. One of the most important goals for Kosovo in terms of transport development is providing the linkage with the Pan-European road corridors. Economic Region South is currently not linked to any of the corridors of the Trans- European Network (TEN). The region is connected to the E10 corridor through the highway Durres – Prizren – Prishtina - Merdare. The construction of the highway has considerably increased the prospects of the region. In the Region South there are around 1200 km of local roads. More than 50% of them or 633 km are asphalted.

Prizren and Sharri Region has very geostrategic position in terms of the communication, and has advantage to other cities in Region, is not far from the coast of Albania on the west and not far from Prishtina airport 70 km (highway) and Skopje airport 130 km. The regional road from Prizren R115 is connecting Prizren through the NP Sharri to Brezovica ski-centre on the east to the Globocica pass with Tetovo (108 km) on Macedonian side.

Prizren's regional geographic position can best be considered by analyzing its position in relation to Kosovo, the Dukagjini plain and the Lumbardh plain. Kosovo is comprised of Kosovo and

Dukagjini areas. They are surrounded by almost all sides with high mountains and represent a clearly divided whole. Kosovo and Dukagjini areas are in the middle part of the Balkan Peninsula. Kosovo and the district of Prizren have a transit character between the Pannonian and Pontic regions on the one hand, and the Aegean-Adriatic region on the other. These transit links enabled this areas, with riverbeds and crossings between them as natural links, to obtain easy movement and represent traffic routes as well. The municipality of Prizren in the north is bordered by the municipalities of Suhareka and Rahovec, in the south with the municipality of Dragash, in the east with the municipality of Štrpce and in the west with the border of the Republic of Albania. Prizren is located outside Europe's highway network. Its important roads do not pass through its territory. The border proximity and unbounded traffic connections with Albania as well as the high mountains that surround Prizren on all sides have had an unfavorable impact on the development of this region. However, natural predispositions give favorable opportunities for connecting with the more remote neighbors. With the formation of qualitative connections, Prizren will have a much better position for both tourist and freight flows as well as a more efficient connection to integration into the wider areas of Kosovo, Albania, Republic of North Macedonia, other border regions and Europe. Historical conditions in previous periods, made relatively inadequate position of Prizren in relation to the main traffic and consumption centers, as well as insufficient opening to the neighboring regions of Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia. This made Prizren not so exploited enough of the soil's pedological composition, the climate conditions of the Mediterranean climate and hydrological conditions, for the development of agriculture and the natural conditions for the development of tourist and recreational activities. All of this has an impact on Prizren's economic structure.

A brief overview of the development history of mountain tourism on Shar Mountain in the Polog Region

In order to discuss about the future development of Shar Mountain as a tourist destination and see it as a potential for the development of mountain tourism in the region, we have to go back to history, to know where the roots and the beginnings of everything are, that someone before us has started.

Shar Mountain, initially, attracted the local population because of trading and economic reasons, while the real attention to Shara was first turned by foreign scientists, adventurers and mountaineers. For the first ascents of the Shar Mountain from a scientific point of view, testify more records dating from the second half of the 19th century. These first scientific ascents are most often performed by geologists and botanists because of the diversity of the terrain and the

diverse flora and fauna that can be found on Shara. Apart from scientific research, Shara is targeted for military tests due to the geostrategic position of the mountain

The first explorers of the Shar Mountain were the French geologists Ami Boué and A. Vikenel who in 1838 from Tetovo climbed to the peak Kobilica and through the village Struzhje descended to Prizren. The following year, 1839, in July, the German botanist Grisebach with nine locals and one soldier under the leadership of a Turkish officer, through the village Stare Selo climbed to Ljuboten. In 1877, a team of military-geographical institute from Vienna was staying at Shara. The famous Balkan Geographers, Jovan Cvijich and Rista Nikolich in 1910 from Tetovo, through the passage "Shar", descended in Prizren.

As we can see, as early as the 19th century there was interest in the Shar Mountain. It occupied a central place on the Balkan Peninsula because of its beauties, the large number of glacial lakes, the vast pastures, the diverse flora and fauna, but also because of the economic and political character. Although the interest in Shar Mountain as a biological, geological and economic-tourist potential was great, in our region there was no opportunity to develop.

In the prehistory of mountaineering, more precisely mountain tourism, we count the ascents on the Shar Mountain by the local population that, of course, had nothing to do with tourism in today's sense of the word, and were performed before the aforementioned scientific ascents. However, this is more recent history in which the population under Shar Mountain begins to move along the mountain, but not because of economic or other reasons, but because of curiosity, the desire to discover new things and to escape from everyday life.

However, mountaineering and mountain tourism as new branches in society and as an organized form of recreation and physical activity, which is in an ideal correlation with nature, on Shar Mountain began in the middle of the twenties of the last century.

On March 23, 1925, few citizens of Tetovo held a meeting - Assembly for the formation of the mountaineering association "Ljuboten"¹⁴. Today it is the oldest active mountain club in Republic of North Macedonia.

¹⁴ Archive of the Mountain club Ljuboten- Tetovo



In the very beginning in the 1930s, people who laid the foundations of mountain tourism on Shar Mountain saw the need for objects on the mountain itself and their role in the further development of mountain tourism. Thus, with the initiative of the mountaineering association "Ljuboten", in 1931 the first Mountain Hut in North Macedonia was built under the top Ljuboten.

The story of the construction of the mountain hut on Popova Shapka is quite significant and interesting. The foundations of this hut are the foundations of the current ski resort Popova Shapka. The building was built in 1934 and was improved and expanded in 1938.

In the same year, the first markings were set for the needs of the current members of the mountaineering associations. The first markings were placed on the paths Tetovo – Popova Shapka, Popova Shapka - Jelak, Jelak - Leshnica and Popova Sapka - TitovVrv.

In this period, in 1938, the associations in Tetovo and Skopje, produced the first promotional material, a brochure, a leaflet for a tourist product - "winter in Shar Mountain".

In the period from 1950 to 1955, two mountaineering huts of Jelak and Leshnica were built and 4 shelters were built on the ridge Shar Mountain. They were at Piribeg, Crn Vrv, under Titov Vrv and in Gjinibeg (the reception huts are the biggest trend in mountain tourism in the Alps).

During this period, other mountaineering clubs were formed in the region: "Jugohrom" from Jegunovce, "Bistrica" from Tearce, "Teteks" and "Jelak" from Tetovo and "Bistra" from Gostivar.

In the eighties, Shara's more intense ascents began, on the one hand by the climbers' members, and on the other by the tourists coming to visit Shara.

For the needs of their organizations, and above all for the safety of their members, mountaineering associations begin in more detail and methodically to mark the mountaineering routes of Shar Mountain. By mutual agreement, the associations divide the routes among themselves according to their needs.

The marking of the paths in that period is done according to the rulebook for marking the mountain paths of the Mountaineering Union of Macedonia, which is in accordance with the Yugoslav Mountain Association. The marking is done by this rulebook until 2000.

A brief overview of the development history of mountain tourism on Shar Mountain in the South Economic Region Kosovo

On the Kosovo side, the city of Prizren is perhaps the most visited location around Sharr Mountains. The tourism in and around the city has already flourished during 1960s when the

asphalt road linking initially Prizren with Prishtina and later with other cities in Kosovo and Republic of North Macedonia was constructed. At the same years, also the hotel Theranda started to work. Later on, with the opening of ski centre in Brezovica the number of tourists increased considerably.

Interest in visiting the values of Shar Mountain

Shar Planina has huge potential for developing mountain tourism: skiing, mountaineering, mountaineering, and mountain trekking, mountain biking, paragliding, sport hunting and fishing. So far, Shara's only ski resort is Popova Shapka. The nearness of the Corridor 8 and Corridor 10, as well as the nearness of the two airports and the connection with the big populated areas in the country, provide for Shar Mountain an ideal opportunity for the development of sustainable rural tourism.

The two existing winter centers, one in North Macedonia and one in Kosovo, are merely an indication that this region should be developed and that it is an ideal place to invest in the field of tourism. On this massif, the existing tourist capacities and infrastructure can be improved, as well as other types of tourism can be developed. The development of Popova Shapka in a modern tourist center and the Shar Mountain region as a recognizable regional tourist destination should be a top priority in the development of tourism at the national level and wider in the region.

With its potentials, this region can become a tourist destination in the next future, which will be visited by tourists from the Republic of North Macedonia, the region and other Western European countries. In comparison with the winter centers in Bansko, Republic of Bulgaria; Brezovica, Republic of Kosovo; Kopaonik, Republic of Serbia, Popova Shapka has natural and human potentials and a specific location to become a competitive regional tourist destination for the development of winter sports.

These include the huge number of hiking trails that start almost from every settlement in the sub-mountain region. Their future probing, arrangement and valorization by difficulty and tourist classification will contribute to the realization of the idea that every inhabited place itself develops as a tourist point which will be an inevitable part of the Shar Mountain destination.

Of great importance are the landscape values and beauties that Shar Planina offers. Views that are unforgettable, regardless of whether you are at the top or at the base or on the opposite slope. To illustrate, when the weather is nice from the highest peak of Shar Mountain, Titov Vrv 2747 meters, you can see the peaks of Rila and Pirin in Bulgaria to the east and the peaks of Prokletije in Albania and Montenegro to the northwest. These values are most significant for visitors who walk on hiking trails and who visit the inhabited places on the base of the mountain.

Rural tourism in these regions must revive. The long-standing tradition of the population, the mixture of cultures and gastronomy, are unavoidable segments that need to be enforced in every town in the sub-mountain region.

Shara has a rich cultural and historical heritage spread throughout the sub-mountain region, with a history dating back to antiquity until today, where very significant artifacts are found. The existence of settlements, for centuries, in the sub-mountain region and the presence of various nations and cultures contributed to the development of their own regional traditions and mentality that gives special significance to the region and makes it unique in terms of cultural - historical traditions, specific dishes, specific regional events, etc.

By developing a tourism product according to the needs of the market, which encompasses the package of sports activities complemented by the offer of regional cultural and historical attractions, as well as all forms of rural tourism, the competitiveness of the region will increase. This will contribute to leaving a positive image of North Macedonia and the Shar Mountain region in the foreign, but also in the domestic market.

This will achieve full protection of the natural and cultural heritage as a basis for the development of tourism, increasing the foreign exchange inflow from tourism, improving investments in other activities for supporting tourism, increasing the employment rate and ultimately improving the quality of life of the people from the region

The interest of foreign tourists to visit Shar Mountain - Polog Region

From 1956 until today, the highest number of overnight stays was realized in the second half of the 80s, with the maximum number of tourists in 1987, when 1,180,806 overnights were realized. During this period, the country was visited mainly by tourists from the former Yugoslavia, but also from the countries of Western Europe, such as Germany, the Netherlands and France. In the 1990s, the crisis that shook the Balkans and the division of the country drastically reduced the level of tourism in the region.

The total number of nights spent in the period from 1995 to 2001 remained unchanged and did not exceed the number of about 600,000 per year. The crisis in 2001 and the reduced level of security have blurred the image of the country in the eyes of potential visitors as well as foreign tourism operators that influenced the opinion of the global tourism industry. During 2001, the country had total of 333,308 overnight stays, the lowest number recorded since 1966 until today. From 2002 to 2005, an increase of 15.3% was recorded in tourist arrivals, reaching the number of 509,706 tourist overnight stays.

Since 2006, the number of tourists is decreasing, as well as the number of overnight stays. In comparison, the number of overnight stays in 2009 compared to 2008 dropped by 10.7%,

although the number of foreign tourists increased by 8.6% in the same period. The total number of tourists in the Republic of Macedonia in the last decade is around 500.000 annually out of which about 200,000 are foreigners. The number of foreigners in the last years has been steadily increasing, from 157,692 in 2003, reached 230,080 in 2007.

In 2007 and 2008 the number of foreign tourists declined to 136,175 foreign tourists in 2008, while in 2009 that number increased to 149,146.

Regionally, the highest number of nights were spent in the southwest region (more than half of the total of 2,019,712 overnight stays in 2007), followed by the Skopje region, the Southeast, Pelagonia and the Polog region. The Polog region is on the fifth place with a total of 37,986 overnight stays in 2007. For the most part, overnight stays in the Polog region belong to the municipality of Mavrovo, due to the ski center - Mavrovo, and in the municipality of Tetovo, because of Popova Shapka. In the period from 2001 to 2005, the city of Skopje was actually the most attractive location for tourists, considering that most of the business visits from abroad were made in the capital.

Out of the total number of foreign tourists in the period from 2001 to 2004, 21% stayed in Skopje, 5% in mountainous areas, 2% in bathing places, and 47% in other tourist resorts, which includes natural and artificial lakes in the Republic of North Macedonia. A total of 25% of tourists decided to visit other municipalities in the Republic of North Macedonia, where there are no baths, lakes or accessible mountain sites.

Most of the foreign visitors in Republic of North Macedonia have already visited the country in the past, more than four times, while 18% of visitors have visited the country for the first time in that year. Taking into account the fact that the percentage of visitors increases with the increase in the number of visits shows that the majority of visitors are returning to Republic of North Macedonia again.

In the Polog region in the period 2010-2014, the total number of arrivals of foreign visitors ranges from 14,478 to 15,332, and overnight stays from 26,299 to 30,846. The numbers show a rise in visitors of 14.5% in the period 2010 - 2014, but we have a fall in the percentage compared to 2007.

The last three years, the situation in the Polog region regarding visitors and overnight stays is as follows¹⁵:

- 2015, the total number of visitors is 30,200, out of which 15,635 are foreign, and overnight stays with a total number of 60,574 out of which foreign are 31,533
- 2016, the total number of visitors is 27,318, out of which 13,513 are foreign, and overnight stays with a total number of 52,590 out of which foreign are 27,703

¹⁵ Annual reports of the Institute for Statistics of the Republic of North Macedonia

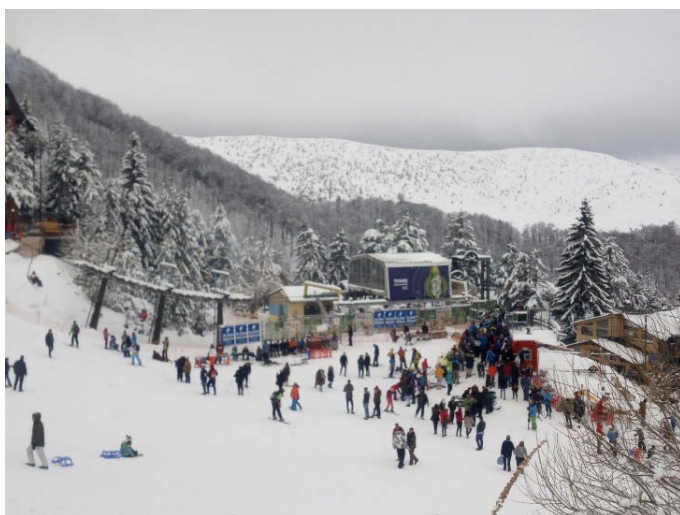
- 2017, the total number of visitors is 30,124, out of which 15,954 are foreign, and overnight stays with a total number of 60,249 out of which foreign are 32,972

However, we emphasize only one part of this segment presented through the realized visit of 22,100 participants from all over the Balkan area, at the event-climbing of Titov Vrv, realized in the period of 30 years, or 18,000 tourists during one weekend in the winter season on Popova Shapka. The underutilized capacities in the winter offer show that, up to now, only 35% of Potova Shapka's potential has been used. We can assume what is the total unused potential for mountain tourism on the Ljuboten – Mavrovo, from the Macedonian side and Ljuboten - Brod from the Kosovo side.

With the complete revitalization and completion of Corridor 8 and connecting the Albanian with the Bulgarian coast, the Polog region will become an inevitable area for tourism development.

The interest of foreign tourists to visit Shar Mountain - Kosovo side

The Sharr mountain region is a region that has attracted many local and foreign visitors for a century. Many years ago, this region has been visited by passersby, study groups for expedition purposes and for military duties. As a beginning point for first touristic visitors, we can refer to a written document (book), "From Ljuboten to Korab" (Od Ljuboten do Koraba) written by Dr. Joze Pretnar leading the expedition in 1933. In this book, it is explained how they passed this region by doing ski mountaineering and many parts of Kosovo region in the Sharr mountains are mentioned and described, which makes them pioneers of mountain tourism in Kosovo side during that time.



The most developing mountain tourism starts with Brezovica ski resort. Brezovica ski resort is established 1954 and it's situated on the north and northwest- facing slopes of Sharr national park. In the 1979, first ski lifts were installed and the ski resorts started to function with the features of 16km of ski slopes. A number of international skiing events took place in the Brezovica ski resort during the period of 1980-90s and since then it has

developed for tourism. Brezovica ski resort is lately widely known as a freeride adventure resort where it attracts many foreign tourists. The Dane Team since 2003 has started to operate with a snow-cat offering freeride tours and this has been seen as a attraction for foreign tourists who

come only for freeride adventure and not only for skiing on the slopes. The resort is also visited by foreign touristic groups who come to do ski touring.

On 12 kilometers from Brezovica, a greater possible potential for mountain tourism is Prevala region, located in the south of Kosovo, which starting from 1970s has been visited by local tourists mainly for recreational and hiking purposes. Mainly because of its geographical position and its microclimate (1515m above sea level) the Prevala region is widely frequented by visitors with health issues. Then, if we continue in the south west on Sharri of Kosovo, we will encounter some centers that have begun to evolve like recreation centers being exploited by mountaineers and workers of several factories in Prizren.

The mountain hut near the village of Struzhe was constructed in 1980, because the old one was a post-block police station, which in the 1950s and in 1950s was given to the mountaineering association for use as a mountain hut, but from November 1979 is out of use. Later it has been renovated and was used for the purpose of hiking activities organized by the local mountaineers. The hiking route of Kosovo at that time, was also visited by a large number of visitors who intended outdoor entertainment, for the research goals of botanists. It is worth mentioning that this location has been also a ski resort of Prizren. It is a fundamental point of skiing history of Prizren region, which has had an indication for the development of sports and mountain tourism as a location within the forest area of the Sharri Mountains. The hut is still in function offering bedding and food and every year it gathers mountaineers from all around the Balkans and wider as the mountaineers association "Sharri" holds their annual traditional meeting at that time and they hike the Korf Peak.

Brod village, located in the southern part of the sharre of Kosovo, only 2 km above the village is located tourist center named Arxhena, construction started in the year 2006-2007 and in this center there is a hotel, two chair lifts and two ski lifts, the center has returned to tourist destination for four seasons. Therefore, it is the newest location in the Sharri mountain of Kosovo as an aspect of mountain tourism offering facinating views and wonderful nature.

Analysis of the existing mountain / recreational paths and the existing infrastructure related to the paths – Polog Region

According to the previously known data and realized activities related to mountain paths, we can conclude that in the Polog Region, or more precisely the part of Shar Mountain, there are mountain, mountainerring, tourist and recreational paths that were created by mountain organizations in the region, but also from associations and organizations that had some connection with outdoor activities. However, although the paths were made, their purpose has

never been valorized for tourism purposes. Their arrangement and regulations were done according to different standards, and above all for sport-recreational activities.

The best indicator for this problem is the "Research study on the tourist potentials of Polog", done by the [Center for Development of the Polog Planning Region](#), which analyses several stakeholders from which it is concluded that if we want the Polog Region, in particular the Shar Mountain region, to become a tourist destination based on mountain, rural or adventurous tourism, it is necessary that the paths used for these purposes be regulated according to European standards and to be categorized and valorized.

In this analysis, it has to be noted that the paths that will be regulated in the future need to be adaptable for the creation of tourist packages that, besides walking and recreation, will offer services with minimum standards for accommodation, catering, transport services and local guide services. Until now, such an example in Shara was only made in 2015, through the Balkan Hiking Adventure project (BHA - these are hiking trails that are interconnected, but are limited to only three positions of the mountain, and their goal is several tours that will be trans border) and 2017 through the High Scardus Trail (HST) route which starts from Ljuboten and crosses the border to Kosovo and continues to the Prespa Lake region.

An analysis of the existing infrastructure related to the paths refers to whether there is marking along, signalization (road signs) with information boards, facilities for rest beside the trail (benches, tables, eaves), accommodation and food facilities (mountaineering hut, overnight accommodation with breakfast option, restaurants) and camping sites (marked or not).

Analysis of the existing mountain/recreational paths and the existing infrastructure related to the paths - Kosovo side

Prizren region, as part of Sharr Mountains, has a registered history of mountaineering activities dating back from 1951 since the first establishment of the Sharri Mountaineering Association. Therefore, many already existing paths (mountaineering, recreational or touristic), were mainly marked by the members of mountaineering associations and lately also from some organizations linked to outdoor activities. Even though most paths were marked for the purposes of hiking/recreational activities there's an evident lack of touristic routes.

Regarding the existing infrastructure related to the paths, in the Brezovica ski resort area and Prevala, there are few hotels and pensions. Also in the center part of the Sharr in Kosovo region, where Ljubinje village is, there is a guest house which can accommodate no more than 5 persons (two bedrooms) and where it serves traditional food. In the region of Black Stone there is one guest house as well, which has a bigger capacity for accommodation (4 bungalows) and serves traditional local food. In the same area, there is a mountaineer's hut which is a property of Sharri

mountaineers association and it's managed by its members with a capacity of 80 beds along with food and transportation.

In the Dragash region, in Brod village, there are two guests' houses and a hotel. Meanwhile in the area called Kopana Voda, near the city of Prizren, there is a renovated mountain hut managed by Haxhi Beda mountaineers club.

Law on Marking of Mountaineering Paths - North Macedonia

According to the Law on Mountain Paths of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism in the Republic of North Macedonia, it is necessary to prepare an elaborate and precise calculation for arranging the path. After processing the path data, by difficulty categorization and tourist valorization, this path is necessary to be arranged, to be installed primary and secondary infrastructure along the path (signalling, info boards, resting benches, etc.) and to be maintained.

To fully define it, the path should have:

- Path's name
- Start and Finish point
- Crossing Point
- Marking
- GPS data
- Infrastructure
- Difficulty Categorization
- Tourist Valorization

It is necessary to regulate paths according to the international standards for arranging paths according to the Declaration of Bechyne - Czech Republic, and to classify i.e. to make a division by difficulty categorization and tourist valorisation according to the standards of the European Ramblers Association, the EU commission and UIMLA - Union of International Mountain Leader Associations.

According to these standards, the arrangement of the path is performed in 10 stages:

Stage	Activity
1	Probing
2	Second probing, documentation
3	Plan for arranging each path
4	Defining the path
5	Cleansing the path
6	Marking
7	Setting Signs and Info boards
8	Control field analysis and corrections
9	Final GPS recording
10	Producing information materials

After arranging the path, it is necessary to maintain it. According to the Law on mountain paths of the Republic of North Macedonia, there is a host of the path. The host maintains the path over the next three years after the establishment. In this period, the host during all seasons must pass the path, clean it, carry out field control analysis, repair it and restore signalling. After the expiration of three years, it is necessary to re-arrange the path, in particular to restore the marking and signalling.

Law on Marking of Mountaineering Paths - Kosovo

In Kosovo, there is no existing institutional legislative regarding the mountain trails but there is a set of rules that are regulated by the Kosovo Mountaineers and Alpinists Federation, which is responsible for standardizing, marking and maintaining. The standard of marking and signage is approved by Kosovo's Mountaineering Federation on its headship meeting in 2016. During the ex-Yugoslavian era, it was also regulated on the basis of the same principle and the Planinarski Smucarski Savez Kosova held the responsibility for it. Furthermore, there is an initiative by the "Sharri" member (Abdurahim Abdushi) who wrote a guideline for marking and signage of the mountain trails.

Mountaineering paths that are marked according to the law on hiking trails of North Macedonia

Mountaineering trails that are marked according to the Law on Hiking Trails of North Macedonia¹⁶, and have been developed in the past five years, are the following:

No.	Trail	Year
1	Village of Staro Selo – Ljuboten Peak – Mountain Hut Ljuboten	2015
2	Mountain Hut Ljuboten – Livadica Lake	2017
3	Mountain Hut Ljuboten – Village of Vratnica – Village of Belovishte	2015
4	Village of Belovishte – Kuchinagledski Vrv Peak	2015
5	Village of Jeloshnik – Ezerski Vrv Peak	2017
6	Village of Brezno – Crn Vrv Peak	2015
7	Village of Vejce – Crn Vrv Peak	2015
8	Village of Leshok – Village of Varvara – Tri Vode – Village of Brezno	2015
9	Village of Vejce – Kobilica Pass	2015
10	Village of Vejce – Guri I Gjat – Village of Veshala	2017
11	Village of Veshala – Vrtop Pass	2015
12	Village of Veshala – Karanikola Lake – Village of Bozovce	2015
13	Village of Bozovce – Leshnica – Krivoshija Waterfall	2017
14	Leshnica – Dzhinibeg Pass	2017
15	Popova Shapka – Vrganj – Jelak	2014
16	Popova Shapka – Gorna Leshnica – Leshnica	2014
17	Popova Shapka – Plat Peak	2014
18	Popova Shapka – Titov Vrv Peak	2017
19	Popova Shapka – Springs of River Pena	2014
20	Village of Gjurgjevishte – Crno Ezero Lake – Rudoka Peak	2015
21	Village of Pozharane – Kuchibaba – Budimov Grob	2015
22	Mountain Hut Sharski Vodi – Ramen Kamen	2015
23	Torbeshki Most – Adzina Reka – Lera	2014
24	Torbeshki Most – Cafa e Kadis – Vrv na Radika	2017

According to the Law on Hiking Trails (Official Gazette of the RM No. 38 dated 24.02.2014), the hiking trails should be arranging (re-marking) every 3 years. From the above table, it can be seen that for most already marked hiking trails, the period for re-arranging and marking has expired. These hiking trails are arranged and marked by the local mountaineering clubs, and the majority of them are scanned and the GPS coordinates are placed on the Shar Mountain maps.

¹⁶ <http://www.fpsm.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/ZAKON-ZA-PLANINSKI-PATEKI.pdf>

Mountaineering paths that are marked on Kosovo side

No.	Trail	Year
1	Brezovica ski resort -Strbacko lake	2017
2	Brezovica ski resort- Crn Kamen Peak- Prevalla	2017
3	Prevalla- Village Gornje Ljubinje	2017
4	Village Gornje Ljubinje- Kobilica Pass	2017
5	Prizren – Mountaineers Sharri Hut	2012
6	Mountaineers Sharri Hut- Vrtop Peak	2012
7	Mountaineers Sharri Hut- Skarpa Peak	2015
8	Prevalla – Crn Vrh Peak	2015
9	Prevalla- Lumbardhi Spring	2015
10	Prevalla- Oshlak Peak	2015
11	Novo Selo Village- Kopana Voda Mountaineers Hut	2010
12	Kopana Voda- Oshlak Peak	2015
13	Brod- Radika Pass	2017
14	Brod- Culje Pass	2017

Many of the paths are marked on touristic topographic maps. Mainly the paths were marked during the period of 2017 meanwhile other paths were registered and marked on touristic topographic maps for the purposes of mountaineering associations.

Maps retrived from the marked paths

Hiking maps:

1. [High Scardus Trail, Shar Mountain, Northeastern Segment](#), 2017, GIZ (hiking map, 1:50000)
2. [High Scardus Trail, Shar Mountain, Central Segment](#), 2017, GIZ (hiking map, 1:50000)
3. [High Scardus Trail, Shar Mountain, Southwestern Segment of Shar Mountain and Northeastern Segment of Korab Mountain](#), 2017, GIZ (hiking map, 1:50000)

Printed Guides, Maps, Digital Applications and Websites, emerged on the Sharr Mountain Trails already marked

Guide books:

1. Hiking into Shar Mountains (Macedonia), 2009, Alliance Francaise de Tetovo, Mountaineering Club Ljuboten, Eko Natyra, Municipality of Tetovo (*guidebook*)
2. Balkan Hiking Adventure, 2015, GIZ (*guidebook*)

Hiking Maps:

1. Shar Planina Mt., wild and time, 2007, Macedonian Ecology Society, Mountaineering Club Ljuboten (*hiking map, 1:100000*)
2. Explore Shar Mountain, 2010, GIZ, EuroNatur, Mountaineering Club Ljuboten, Macedonian Ecology Society (*hiking map, 1:100000*)
3. Balkan Hiking Adventure, Shar Mountain Northeastern Segment, 2015, GIZ (*hiking map, 1:40000*)
4. Balkan Hiking Adventure, Shar Mountain Central & Southwestern Segment, 2015, GIZ (*hiking map, 1:40000*)
5. Shar Planina, 55 trails, 2016, EuroNatur, Friends of Sharra (*hiking map, 1:75000*)
6. High Scardus Trail, Shar Mountain, Northeastern Segment, 2017, GIZ (*hiking map, 1:50000*)
7. High Scardus Trail, Shar Mountain, Central Segment, 2017, GIZ (*hiking map, 1:50000*)
8. High Scardus Trail, Shar Mountain, Southwestern Segment of Shar Mountain and Northeastern Segment of Korab Mountain, 2017, GIZ (*hiking map, 1:50000*)

Mobilie application:

1. Exploring Shar Mountain, 2014 / updated 2017 – produced by Mountaineering Club “Ljuboten” – Tetovo
2. Balkan Hiking Adventure, 2015 - produced by GIZ Skopje

Web pages:

1. <http://sharplanina.com.mk/>
2. <http://www.balkanhikingadventure.com/>

Strategic documents for the region

1. Визибилити студија за основање на Национален Парк од македонска страна на Шар Планина, Балканска Фондација за одржлив развој, 2006
2. Студија за развој на туризмот во Шарпланинскиот регион, ЕПИ Центар – Скопје, 2010
3. Зајакнување на алтернативниот туризам во руралните подрачја на Полог, Центар за развој на Полошки Плански регион, 2015
4. Стратегија за развој на туризмот во Општина Тетово, Општина Тетово, 2017
5. Студија за потенцијали за развој на рурален туризам во Шарпланинските села во Општина Тетово, Општина Тетово, 2017
6. A feasibility study for the establishment of a National Park on the Macedonian side of Shar Mountain, Balkan Foundation for Sustainable Development, 2006
7. Study on tourism development in the Sharplanin region, EPI Center - Skopje, 2010
8. (<https://www.skijanje.rs/assets/publikacije/PDF-fajlovi/Strategija-za-turizam-na-Sarplanina.pdf>)
9. Strengthening of the alternative tourism in the rural areas of Polog Region, Center for development of Polog planning region, 2015
10. Sustainable Development of Rural Economies , A Guideline for practitioners, SWG RRD 2016
11. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jelena_Milovanovic5/publication/315768647_STRENGTHENING_VALUE_CHAINS_FOR_SUSTAINABLE_DEVELOPMENT_OF_RURAL_ECONOMIES_A_GUIDELINE_FOR_PRACTITIONERS/links/58e36c5492851c1b9d6b07f7/STRENGTHENING-VALUE-CHAINS-FOR-SUSTAINABLE-DEVELOPMENT-OF-RURAL-ECONOMIES-A-GUIDELINE-FOR-PRACTITIONERS.pdf
12. Strategy for rural development of Municipality of Tetovo, Municipality of Tetovo, 2017
13. <http://www.tetova.gov.mk/docs/Strategija%20za%20RR%20Tetovo.pdf>
14. Tourism Development Plan for Polog region (Shar Mountain, Tetovo and surroundings) Locals and Regional Competitiveness Project 2018
15. <http://lrp.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Destination-8-Polog-area-Tetovo-Popova-Shapka-and-surroundings.pdf>
16. Study on Potentials for Development of Rural Tourism in the Shar Mountain villages in the Municipality of Tetovo, Municipality of Tetova, 2017
17. <https://www.skijanje.rs/assets/publikacije/PDF-fajlovi/Strategija-za-turizam-na-Sarplanina.pdf>

Discover Shar Mountain "What is offered and what to do for future ..."

Study of tourism opportunities in Polog and Prizren regions

