

## JOINT CULTURAL CALENDAR “BALKAN ROUTES AND EUROPEAN INFLUENCES”

### 1. General Information

Objective: Synchronizing the cultural event across the four Project municipalities to avoid overlaps and develop shared touristic packages

Period: Annual (focusing on the active touristic seasons)

Thematic focus: European Influence and Local Traditions during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

### 2. Cultural Events in the Project Cross Border Region (Dupnitsa, Kyustendil (Bulgaria), Kriva Palanka, Kratovo (North Macedonia))

Month	Partner organizer	Municipal or joint events	Event name	Venue	Heritage type	Cross border relation	Target group	Notes
January 19 <sup>th</sup>	Kriva Palanka Municipality	Kriva Palanka	Pivtiyada Festival - an annual culinary event held on Epiphany Day ( <i>Voditsi</i> )	Kriva Palanka, North Macedonia	Intangible	Gastronomy, traditional food	Participants, local citizens, tourists	
January 29 <sup>th</sup>	Kyustendil Municipality	Kyustendil	Liberation of Kyustendil Festive	Town square, Ilyo Voyvoda	Tangible	History	Tourists, local citizens, students	

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			procession, wreath-laying ceremony at the monument of Ilyo Voyvoda, and a historical reenactment.	Monument, House museum of Iyo Voyvoda				
January 31 <sup>st</sup>	Dupnitsa Municipality, History Museum – Dupnitsa	Dupnitsa	Liberation of Dupnitsa Festive procession, wreath-laying ceremony at the Monument to the Fallen Volunteers (Opalchentsi) of Dupnitsa, historical reenactment and presentation of traditional recipes from the Dupnitsa region.	Town square	Mixed	History, traditional rituals, gastronomy	Tourists, local citizens, students	
February, 1 <sup>st</sup>	Kyustendil Municipality and Vladimir Dimitrov – the Master Art Gallery	Kyustendil	<i>Vladimir Dimitrov</i> – the Master National Art Award,	Vladimir Dimitrov – the Master Art Gallery	Tangible	Art	Artists, painters, participants in the award ceremony, tourists, local citizens	

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February	Foundation “With Heart for Kriva Palanka”	Kriva Palanka	Susuriga Masquerade Festival	Kriva Palanka	Intangible	Traditions and rituals in the cross border region	Participants, tourists, local citizens	
February, the first weekend of the month (7–8 2026)	Kyustendil Municipality	Kyustendil	Dzhamala National Masquerade Festival	Town Square	Intangible	Traditions and rituals in the cross border region	Participants, tourists, local citizens	
February 24 <sup>th</sup>	Kratovo Municipality	Kratovo	Town Festival	St. George of Kratovo Church, town square	Tangible	Church and Municipal Festival	Pilgrims, local citizens, tourists from the cross border region	
March	Patnik Association, Kriva Palanka	Kriva Palanka	Bride's Pilgrimage (also called “Adoration of the bride”) to St. Theodore Tyron – Todoritsa	Village of Konopnitsa, Kriva Palanka	Intangible	Traditional customs, participants from the border region	Young brides who got married between the two St. Theodore Tyron Saturdays, accompanied by their mothers-in-law dressed in authentic national costumes from their region, tourists, citizens, and artisans from the cross-border region	

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March, 3rd	Dupnitsa and Kyustendil Municipalities	Dupnitsa and Kyustendil	Liberation of Bulgaria, wreath-laying ceremony at the monument	The town squares of Dupnitsa and Kyustendil	Tangible	History	Local citizens, students, tourists	Official National Holiday
March, 9th	Dupnitsa and Kyustendil Municipalities	Dupnitsa and Kyustendil	Commemoration of the Rescue of the Bulgarian Jews from the Holocaust wreath-laying ceremonies in Kyustendil and Dupnitsa	The town squares of Dupnitsa and Kyustendil	Tangible	History	Local citizens, students, tourists	
March 21 <sup>st</sup>	Kyustendil Municipality	Kyustendil	KYUSTENDIL SPRING Official Holiday of the town of Kyustendil	Town Square and Hisarlaka Hill, Kyustendil	Mixed	History, traditional customs and rituals	Tourists, students, local citizens, craftsmen and merchants	
April	City Museum Kriva Palanka	Kriva Palanka	Easter Tradition	The village of Gradets, Kriva Palanka	Intangible	Traditions and customs	Tourists, local citizens and students, people	

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							from the cross border region	
April, 20 <sup>th</sup>	History Museum – Dupnitsa	Dupnitsa	Lecture on the occasion of the April Uprising from 1876	Dupnitsa History Museum	Mixed	History	University teachers, PhD students, museum specialists, young scholars, students, citizens from the cross border region	
April 23 <sup>rd</sup> – July 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Regional History Museum – Kyustendil	Joint even, all Project partners involved	Trainings - Developing tourism by enhancing the appeal of cultural institutions	Regional History Museum – Kyustendil	Mixed	Joint participation	museum specialists	2 trainings - 1 in Bulgaria, 1 in North Macedonia for museum specialists; under the CULTURAL AREA Project Each training session is a one-day event lasting 4 hours, consisting of presentations by lecturers, practical exercises, and a discussion.

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April 23 <sup>rd</sup> – July 22 <sup>nd</sup>	History Museum – Dupnitsa	Joint even, all Project partners involved	Traveling exhibition "Old Houses Tell Stories"	Regional All partner institutions	Mixed	Joint participation	Tourists of the cross border region, museum workers	The exhibition will consist of 15 panels, each measuring 100/70 cm and will present the stories of old houses in the CULTURAL AREA of Bulgaria - North Macedonia, their architecture, builders, owners, and historical context
April 23 <sup>rd</sup> – July 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Regional History Museum – Kyustendil, City Museum – Kriva Palanka	Joint even, all Project partners involved	Exchange of good practices in working with youth audiences	Emfiedzhieva House Museum in Kyustendil and Open-air Museum in the village of Gradec, Kriva Palanka	Mixed	Joint participation	museum specialists	Two seminars are planned, 1 for Bulgaria and 1 for North Macedonia which will take place in the new cultural spaces funded by this project.
May	Dupnitsa Municipality,	Dupnitsa	May Holidays of Culture	Town square	Mixed	History, traditional customs,	Tourists, local citizens, students	

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	History Museum – Dupnitsa					gastronomy, folklore		
May	Dupnitsa Municipality	Dupnitsa	Southwest International Folklore Festival "Peace in the Balkans"	Town square	Intangible	Folklore festival	Tourists, local citizens, students	
May, Saturday around 18 <sup>th</sup>	Regional History Museum – Kyustendil, Dupnitsa History Museum	Kyustendil, Dupnitsa	European Night of Museum	History Museums in Dupnitsa and Kyustendil,	Mixed	Common European initiative	Tourists, local citizens, children and students	
May - June	Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Regional History Museum – Kyustendil	Joint	Joint Scientific Conference	Regional History Museum – Kyustendil, Conference Hall	Mixed	History	University teachers, PhD students, museum specialists, young scholars, students, citizens from the cross border region	
June	Lazar Sofiyanov Cultural Club, Municipality of Kratovo	Kratovo	International Art Colony "Lazar Sofiyanov"	Kratovo	Tangible	Creating artworks inspired by the ancient architecture of Kratovo	Participants, children from the cross-border region, tourists and local citizens	

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June	Lazar Sofijanov Cultural Club	Kratovo	International Folklore Festival "Razigrano Kratovo"	Kratovo	Tangible	Folklore	Participants, tourists from the cross border region
June, one weekend in the month second half	Municipality of Kyustendil	Municipal	Cherry Festival	Towns square	Intangible	Fertility, gastronomy	Tourists, craftsmen, citizens of Kyustendil and the region, merchants
June, end of the month	Dupnitsa Municipality	Municipal	<i>Rila ni Gleda (Rila Watches Us)</i> Folklore Festival	Rila Park, Dupnitsa	Mixed	Tradition, folklore, cultural heritage	Participant, tourists, citizens and visitors from the cross border region
July	Cultural centre Kriva Palanka	Kriva Palanka	International Children's Folklore Festival "Palanecka Troyka"	Kriva Palanka	Mixed	Tradition, folklore, cultural heritage	Participant, tourists, citizens and visitors from the cross border region
July, last weekend	Municipality of Kyustendil, Pautalia Folklore Dance Ensemble in Kyustendil	Kyustendil	International Folklore Festival <i>Silver Pafta</i>	Town Centre	Intangible	Folklore Festival	Folklore dance formations from Bulgaria, cross border region and all over the world, tourists, local citizens
July, one weekend in	Municipality of Kyustendil, Tourism Council	Kyustendil	Hisarlaka Experience	Hisarlaka Hill	Tangible	Festival including popular	Tourists, business organizations, local and from the cross

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the month middle	Association in Kyustendil					musical performances	border region citizens, craftsmen	
July, middle	History Museum – Dupnitsa	Dupnitsa	Museum Summer	Dupnitsa History Museum	Mixed	History	Students	
August, 15 <sup>th</sup>	Municipality of Kyustendil, Kyustendil Church	Kyustendil	Assumption of the Virgin Mary – Cultural Forum Panagia - Rising of the Bread	Kyustendil, town center	Mixed	Church Holiday	Pilgrims, tourists, local citizens, members of Cultural Clubs, craftsmen	
August, 25-28	City Museum Kriva Palanka	Kriva Palanka	<i>Shopsko Selo</i> Festival	The Quay of Kriva Reka, Kriva Palanka	Intangible	Tradition, customs, cultural heritage	Tourists, town visitors, citizens from the cross border region	
August, 25-28	Cultural centre Kriva Palanka	Kriva Palanka	International Folklore Festival "St. Yoakim of Osogovo"	Town square	Mixed	Tradition, customs, cultural heritage	Participants, local and from the cross border region citizens and tourists	
August, 28-29	Municipality of Kriva Palanka, Foundation “With Heart for Kriva Palanka”	Kriva Palanka	Patron Holiday of Saint Yoakim of Osogovo Monastery	Saint Yoakim of Osogovo Monastery	Mixed	Tradition, religion celebrations, participation of regional popular artists	Tourists, citizens from the cross border region	
September	History Museum – Dupnitsa and Regional Hitsory	Dupnitsa, Kyustendil	European Heritage Days	History Museum Dupnitsa and Regional Hitsory	Tangible	Common European initiative	Tourists, students, citizens from the cross border region	

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	Museum – Kyustendil			Museum Kyustendil				
September	Cultural Club “Lazar Sofianov” and Secondary School “Mitko Pentsukliski”	Kratovo	Grape Harvest Traditions of Kratovo Festival	Kratovo	Intangible	Customs, rituals	Students, wine producers , local citizens, tourists	
September, weekend in the end of the month	Municipality of Kyustendil	Kyustendil	Fertility Festival	Town square	Mixed	Fertility	Tourists, craftsmen, citizens of Kyustendil and the region, merchants	
October	Dupnitsa Municipality	Dupnitsa	Town Official Holiday	Town Square	Mixed	History, traditions, customs, gastronomy, folklore	Tourists, students, local citizens	
October	Municipality of Kriva Palanka	Kriva Palanka	Festival <i>Shopska Sofra</i>	Kriva Palanka	Intangible	Gastronomy, traditional food	Tourists from the region, town visitors , European municipalities	
October	Municipality of Kratovo	Kratovo	Potatoes Festival	Kratovo	Intangible	Fertility	Participants, town visitors, local citizens, tourists	

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October, 23 <sup>rd</sup> 2026 – January, 22 <sup>nd</sup> 2027	Regional History Museum – Kyustendil	Joint even, all Project partners involved	Three-day eco-training for children	Ecological Education Center in the village of Slokoschitsa, Kyustendil Municipality	Natural	Joint event	Children	The Eco-training is under the CULTURAL AREA Project
October, 23 <sup>rd</sup> 2026 – January, 22 <sup>nd</sup> 2027	PEONIYA, Kratovo	Joint even, all Project partners involved	Three-day festival "Balkan Heritage of the 19th Century	Kratovo	Mixed		local communities; NGO sector	Three day festival for presentation of Balkans traditional culture under the CULTURAL AREA Project. On the festival all Project partners will invite participants to present Balkans folklore, Balkans food and Balkans costumes and 1(one) demonstration of battle against Ottomans.

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November, 8 <sup>th</sup> St. Dimitar's Day	Shancheva Ethno House	Kratovo	Salt Festival	Shancheva Ethno House	Tangible	Gastronomy tradition of dishes with salt	Craftsmen, local houses, participants, town visitors	
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### 3. Thematic Cultural Routes and Cultural Events

#### 3.1 Route: The European Spirit at Home – Focus on 19th-century interiors, furniture and architectural details

The route traces the emergence of the urban *Alafranga* style (meaning *in the French manner*) within the traditional architecture of Kyustendil, Kriva Palanka and Kratovo. It refers to the 19th-century transition from Oriental to European-style interiors, specifically the decorative wall niches and painted landscapes found Dupnitsa, in Balkan townhouses. The route reveals how local merchants and artisans integrated cultural influences from Vienna, Leipzig and Istanbul into the design of their private homes.

Route Sites (Architecture)	Connected Events			
	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn
Kyustendil – Antique and Late Antique Fortress on the Hisarlaka Hill, Pirgova Stone Tower, old town houses	Historical Reenactment, January 29 <sup>th</sup>	Kyustendil Spring Official Holiday of the town of Kyustendil, March 21 <sup>st</sup>  European Night of Museum, May	International Folklore Festival <i>Silver Pafta</i> , July  Hisarlaka Experience, July  Panagia – Rising of the Bread, August 15	European Heritage Days, September  Fertility Festival, September

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Dupnitsa – Clock Tower and old town houses	Historical Reenactment, January 31 <sup>st</sup>	Lecture on the occasion of the April Uprising from 1876, April May Holidays of Culture, May Southwest International Folklore Festival "Peace in the Balkans", May European Night of Museum, May	Museum Summer , July	European Heritage Days, September Town Official Holiday, October
Kriva Palanka old town buildings, the village of Gradets & St. Yoakim of Osogovo Monastery	Pivtiyada Festival, January 19 <sup>th</sup>	Easter Tradition, April	International Children's Folklore Festival <i>Palanecka Troyka</i> , July International Folklore Festival <i>St. Yoakim of Osogovo</i> and Patron Holiday of the Saint, August	Festival <i>Shopska Sofra</i> , October
Kratovo Stone – Towers and old town houses	Town Festival, February 24 <sup>th</sup>	International Art Colony <i>Lazar Sofiyanov</i> , June	Razigrano Kratovo (Dancing in the streets of Kratovo)	Three-day festival <i>Balkan Heritage of the 19th Century</i>

**3.2 Route: Sounds and Flavors of the Balkans** – Food and Music Festivals showcasing the fusion of European culture and local traditions.

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The route is designed to highlight the cross-border gastronomic and musical heritage. It invites you to taste the history of the Balkans within the Dupnitsa – Kratovo border region.

Municipalities	Connected Events			
	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn
Kyustendil		Kyustendil Spring Official Holiday of the town of Kyustendil, Popular and Folklore music, traditional food and drinks, March 21 <sup>st</sup>	International Folklore Festival <i>Silver Pafta</i> , July Cherry Festival, cherries, cherry dishes, Folklore and Popular music, June Hisarlaka Experience, Popular music, traditional food and drinks, July Panagia – Rising of the Bread, Liturgical chants & Bells, varieties of bread and bakeries, August 15	Fertility Festival, fruits and vegetables, fruit and vegetables dishes, Popular music, September
Dupnitsa		May Holidays of Culture, Folklore music and traditional food, May Southwest International Folklore Festival "Peace in the Balkans", May		Town Official Holiday, Folklore music and traditional food, October

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Kriva Palanka	Pivtiyada Festival, music and traditional food , January 19 <sup>th</sup>	Easter Tradition, April	International Children's Folklore Festival <i>Palanecka Troyka</i> , July  <i>Shopsko Selo</i> Festival, Folklore music and traditional food  International Folklore Festival "St. Yoakim of Osogovo" and Patron Holiday of the Saint , Folklore and Popular music and traditional food, August	Festival <i>Shopska Sofra</i> , October
Kratovo Stone	Town Festival, music and traditional food, February 24 <sup>th</sup>	International Art Colony <i>Lazar Sofiyanov</i> , June	Razigrano Kratovo, Folklore music	Grape Harvest Traditions of Kratovo Festival, Folklore music, Wine and traditional food, September  Potatoes Festival, October  Salt Festival, tradition of dishes with salt, November  Three-day festival <i>Balkan Heritage of the 19th Century</i> , October – December, Balkans

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				folklore, Balkans food and Balkans costumes
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**3.3 Route: Masters and Travelers** – Events dedicated to prominent figures (architects, builders and merchants), who have worked throughout the entire cross-border region.

The route connects the legendary stone bridges and towers of Kratovo with the elegant townhouses of Kriva Palanka, Kyustendil and Dupnitsa, celebrating the people whose travels and craftsmanship bridged cultures and centuries.

Key Figure	Municipality	Site	Architectural Detail	Connected Events
Vladimir Dimitrov – the Master. While primarily a painter, he represents the ultimate <i>traveler of the soul</i> , bringing the colors of the Kyustendil countryside to world-renowned galleries	Kyustendil – the Spirit of the National Revival and The Master	Art Gallery Vladimir Dimitrov – the Master	Modern Style Building from the Socialism period	<i>Vladimir Dimitrov – the Master</i> National Art Award, February 1 <sup>st</sup>
Bishop Ilarion of Kyustendil and Lovech, buried in the church	Kyustendil - The Spirit of the National Revival and "The Master"	The Church of the Virgin Merry Assumption (1816).	Church architecture from the Bulgarian Revival period	PANAGIA – Rising of the Bread, August 15

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St. Ivan of Rila	Dupnitsa – the Spirit of Rila Mountain	St. Ivan of Rila Monastery	Assumption of St. Ivan of Rila Church	<i>Rila ni Gleda (Rila Watches Us)</i> Folklore Festival, June
St. Yoakim of Osogovo, who traveled and worked throughout the region to spread literacy and spirituality	Kriva Palanka - Spirituality and Hospitality	St. Yoakim of Osogovo Monastery	The multi-domed Church of St. Yoakim of Osogovo Monastery, featuring unique frescoes and a massive stone construction	Patron Holiday of Saint Yoakim of Osogovo Monastery, August
George of Kratovo. A patron saint and a symbol of the city's medieval spirituality	Kratovo – the City of Medieval Towers and Bridges	Medieval Bridges (e.g., Radin Bridge). Kratovo stands as living testimony to the genius of local builders who mastered the steep volcanic terrain with sophisticated stone architecture	The distinctive stone towers, which uniquely combined residential life with defensive functions	Town Festival, February 24 <sup>th</sup>

**3.4 Route: Path of Living Traditions** – Events that unite shared spiritual values, folk customs and traditional celebrations across the entire cross-border region.

The route focuses on the intangible cultural heritage that remains identical or very similar in all four municipalities. It is a testimony of the shared common traditions of Kyustendil, Dupnitsa, Kriva Palanka and Kratovo. It connects sacred spaces (monasteries and churches) with the living rituals (festivals and pilgrimages) that define the shared identity of the cross-border region.

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Tradition / Ritual	Event	Municipality	Date
Throwing of the cross on the Epiphany Day into the Kriva River – a symbol of local hospitality and culinary heritage. Tasting of traditional homemade pivtija (pacha/aspic)	Pivtiyada Festival	Kriva Palanka	January 19 <sup>th</sup>
Welcoming the new year and sending the old year away	Susuriga Masquerade Festival	Kriva Palanka	February
	Dzhamala National Masquerade Festival	Kyustendil	February
The Rite of Passage Connection	Bride's Pilgrimage to St. Theodore Tyron – Todoritsa	Kriva Palanka	March
The Communal Identity Connection	Southwest International Folklore Festival Peace in the Balkans	Dupnitsa	May
	Grape Harvest Traditions of Kratovo Festival	Kratovo	September
The Sacred Bread Connection	Cultural Forum Panagia – Rising of the Bread	Kyustendil	August, 15 <sup>th</sup>

**3.5 Route: Testimonies of the Revival and European Ideas** – Focus on cultural and historical landmarks, monuments, church and educational life, schools, literary activity and spiritual centers that introduced European ideas to local communities.

This route explains how the region became modern. It focuses on the intellectual and patriotic awakening. This route connects the physical sites of enlightenment (schools and libraries) with events that celebrate the Awakeners and the fight for freedom.

Connection	Event / Key Features	Municipality	Date
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The Awakeners, Patriotic & Education	Liberation of Kyustendil Festive procession, wreath-laying ceremony at the monument of Ilyo Voyvoda, and a historical reenactment.	Kyustendil	January, 29 <sup>th</sup>
	Liberation of Dupnitsa Festive procession, wreath-laying ceremony at the Monument to the Fallen Volunteers (Opalchentsi) of Dupnitsa, historical reenactment and presentation of traditional recipes from the Dupnitsa region.	Dupnitsa	January, 31 <sup>st</sup>
	150th Anniversary of the April Uprising & Historical Reenactment	Dupnitsa	April, 20 <sup>th</sup>
	European Heritage Days & Museum Exhibits	Dupnitsa, Kyustendil	September
The Literary & Spiritual Connection	Kratovo Town Festival – the educational work of Yoakim Kurchovski	Kratovo	February, 24 <sup>th</sup>
	St. Yoakim Osogovski Patron Saint Days. Focus on the Monastery as a spiritual and sancred place	Kriva Palanka	August
The Urban Intellectual Connection	Commemoration of the Rescue of the Bulgarian Jews from the Holocaust wreath-laying ceremonies in Kyuistendil and Dupnitsa	Dupnitsa and Kyustendil	March, 9th
	European Night of Museum	Dupnitsa and Kyustendil	May, Saturday around 18 <sup>th</sup>
	International Art Colony <i>Lazar Sofijanov</i> . The medieval scriptoriums and the	Kratovo	June

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Contract RD 02-29-380 of 22.04.2025, Interreg VI-A IPA Bulgaria-North Macedonia 2021-2027,  
Priority 3 "Integrated development of the cross-border region

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 Bulgaria - North Macedonia

	<p>transition to modern 19th-century literacy. Using the Kratovo Literary School (Scriptorium) as a thematic anchor for artistic workshops.</p>		
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