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ЩОДО ПИТАННЯ «КОМПЕНСАЦІЇ» ВТРАЧЕНИХ ОСОБОЮ ІНФОРМАЦІЙНИХ МОЖЛИВОСТЕЙ ПРИ ОБМЕЖЕННІ ПРАВА НА ІНФОРМАЦІЮ

SPATIAL STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONAL ROLE OF CULTURAL-HISTORICAL HERITAGE IN THE SEVLIEVO REGION

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Abstract: The cultural and historical heritage of the municipality is not only a source of pride and identity, but also a real economic and social resource that determines the nature of modern development. Cultural heritage is also a strategic resource, as Sevlievo preserves a rich historical and architectural environment-Renaissance houses, ethnographic complexes and spiritual monuments that build the image of the region as a cultural center. The municipality actively uses this heritage to promote regional initiatives, festivals and international projects that increase tourist interest and expand economic opportunities. Culture is becoming a strategic asset through which added value is created in sectors such as tourism, services and creative industries. The economic structure of the Sevlievo region in recent years has been distinguished by a successful combination of traditional production and modern foreign and Bulgarian enterprises. This report aims to present the main cultural and tourist sites and routes on the territory of the Sevlievo municipality and to analyze their importance for social development, employment and the identity of the local community.

Keywords: Cultural heritage, Sevlievo region, synergy between culture and education, economic opportunities.

Sevlievo Municipality, located in the central part of Bulgaria, in the heart of the Fore-Balkans, is characterized by a rich cultural and historical heritage, favorable natural resources and strategic geographical location. These factors create prerequisites for sustainable development of tourism and socio-economic prosperity of the region. This report aims to present the main cultural and tourist sites and routes on the territory of the Sevlievo Municipality and to analyze their importance for

social development, employment and identity of the local community. The Sevlievo region is an example of a sustainable combination of culture, economy and education. The cultural and historical heritage of the municipality is not only a source of pride and identity, but also a real economic and social resource that determines the nature of modern development. Cultural heritage is also a strategic resource, as Sevlievo preserves a rich historical and architectural environment – Renaissance houses, ethnographic complexes and spiritual monuments, which build the image of the region as a cultural center. The municipality actively uses this heritage to promote regional initiatives, festivals and international projects that increase tourist interest and expand economic opportunities. Culture is becoming a strategic asset through which added value is created in sectors such as tourism, services and creative industries. The economic structure of the Sevlievo region in recent years has been distinguished by a successful combination of traditional industries and modern foreign and Bulgarian enterprises. Alongside the industrial zones, which include internationally renowned companies, a cultural economy is also developing – based on:

- Cultural tourism: The attendance of sites such as the Dandolovi Houses, the Dryanovo Monastery, Etara and the museums in Gabrovo stimulates entrepreneurship in the fields of accommodation, gastronomy and souvenir trade.
- Craft and artistic practices: The revival of traditional crafts through festivals and workshops creates sustainable microeconomic forms and new jobs.
- Small family businesses: Many local food, beverage and souvenir producers use cultural identity as part of their marketing strategy – emphasizing the link between authenticity and quality.
- One of the strongest elements of the Sevlje model is the interaction between educational institutions and the cultural environment. The six schools in the municipality and over seventeen community centers are actively working on programs for local history, arts and local lore, geography and ecology, which foster an interest in cultural heritage and entrepreneurship among young people. In partnership with cultural institutions, initiatives such as student exhibitions, local

history competitions and geographical projects for the digitalization of cultural heritage are organized. Thus, education not only successfully preserves traditions, but also prepares personnel for the modern economy – in the field of tourism, cultural management, advertising and creative industries. We believe quite rightly that this synergy between culture and education provides a long-term effect: young people stay in the region, develop family businesses, participate in municipal projects and contribute to the revitalization of cultural centers.

Table. 1

Cultural synergy in the Sevlievo region

Cultural site/initiative	Economic activity	Educational initiative	Social impact
Ethnographic complex "Dandolovi Kashti"	Cultural tourism, souvenir trade, hospitality	School lessons on local history and ethnography	Employment and economic activity in the cultural sector
Festival "Sevlievo – City of Pumpkin"	Tourism, gastronomy, local producers	Workshops for children and students in arts and cooking	Popularization of local identity and traditions
Sevlievo – Dryanovo Monastery and "Bacho Kiro" cave	Religious and historical tourism, restaurant business, hospitality, educational practices	Excursions and study routes on Bulgarian history	Increased tourist interest and social connectivity
Chitalishte "Razvitie 1870"	Cultural events, exhibitions, art training	Courses in theater, music and cultural management	Development of creative skills and cultural literacy
School programs in local history and revival of old crafts	Revival of crafts, entrepreneurship, cultural management projects	Partnerships with the municipality and business for practical training	Partnerships with the municipality and business for practical training, retention of young people in the municipality

Source: prepared by the author, based on data from the Municipality of Sevlievo, 2025

We can classify the implemented policies and initiatives of the municipality, aimed at the integration of culture in socio-economic development, as extremely diverse and creative. We point out the most prominent ones, such as:

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- Support for festivals with a cultural and economic effect – "Pumpkin Festival", "Days of Sevlievo", "Craft Days", "Innovation Days", etc.

- Creation of partnerships between the municipality, business and schools, aimed at training in entrepreneurship, cultural management and sustainable tourism.

- Maintenance and restoration of cultural sites by implementing the mechanisms of European programs and public-private partnerships.

Synergy between culture, economy and education in Sevlievsky district

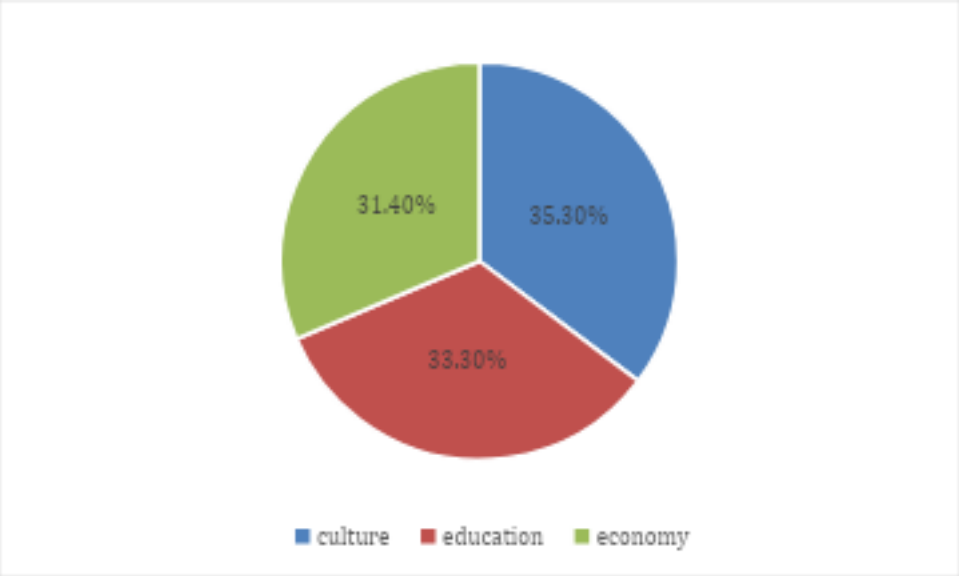


Fig. 1. Approximate balance of the relationship between the three main components:

The diagram symbolizes the close synergy between them: culture is the foundation and inspiration, the economy provides a resource, and education prepares human capital for sustainable development. In the context of the study, we present interesting projects/initiatives in the region that can serve as good examples of interaction. They have an educational/cultural nature and are related to heritage or to the activity of young people. Here are some of them:

1. project “Children-Creators of Beauty”. A project established in Sevlievo, in which “children will acquire new knowledge and skills … with new costumes and accessories, as well as with dolls … for training … in the direction of “Arts”. It shows how young people in Sevlievo can engage in creative initiatives that have cultural value.

2. A project described as "Youth Cultural Event in Sevlievo" has received the regional governor's award for 2023. It embodies municipal initiatives that can create a platform for the participation of the local community in cultural projects.

3. Exhibition and large-scale copies of historical sites in Sevlievo – “On a scale of 1:50…” Small-scale copies of emblematic historical sites exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art were created. Although not described as a “student project”, this format is very suitable for educational work with students: models, mock-ups, visualizations of cultural and historical heritage. The Sevlievo region demonstrates how cultural heritage can be not only a memory, but also a resource – a tool for creating economic prosperity and social cohesion. The connection between culture, education and economy turns Sevlievo into a model for integrated development, in which cultural identity is the basis of a sustainable future. After research and personal conversations with teachers and specialists from the Municipality, we present several more general initiatives in the region that are successfully adapted as educational projects related to cultural and historical heritage:

Initiative Achieved Adapted as a project

Program of cultural events – Sevlievo Municipality (2025) Many events for children, workshops (“Clay hands”, “Pumpkin colored fantasies”) Civic associations or student groups can participate in the workshops, prepare an exhibition/report on “tangible and intangible heritage of Sevlievo”

School project Students participate in the project “Mathematics around us” under the Erasmus+ program A module can be created: “Cultural heritage around us – applications of mathematics/geography/art”, with students to explore, document heritage sites in the region

Information about the sites Activities around the inclusion of sites in the list of “100 national tourist sites” Student project: “Cultural heritage route in Sevlievo region” – students to create a map, presentation, digital content for the sites

Source: Summarized by the author, based on data from the Department of Culture, Sevlievo Municipality, 2025

It is known that the region is the heir to a rich history – from ancient and medieval finds to Renaissance architectural ensembles. During the Renaissance, the city became a significant craft and trade center. Today, the Ethnographic Complex “Dandolovi Kashti”, the Church of “St. Prophet Elijah” and the proximity to the

Dryanovo Monastery and the “Bacho Kiro” Cave build a cultural route that attracts domestic and foreign visitors. This cultural memory contributes to the formation of regional identity and affirms Sevlievo as the guardian of national traditions.

The medieval fortress of Hotalich is a restored archaeological complex used for historical reenactments and festivals. The Clock Tower, built in 1777, contains one of the oldest functioning clock mechanisms in Bulgaria. The Dandolov Houses from the National Revival period house an ethnographic exhibition presenting the traditional lifestyle and culture of the local population. The Hadzhistoyanov School, the first secular classroom school in the town, now functions as a museum of educational history. The Church of St. Prophet Elijah, built in 1834 by masters of the Tryavna Art School, reflects the architectural and artistic traditions of the period.

The municipality of Sevlievo offers a variety of natural and geographical landmarks that favor the development of

1. ecotourism and mountain tourism:

- Alexander Stamboliyski Dam – suitable for water sports, fishing and eco-recreation.

- Sinite Skali Nature Park and the areas around the village of Stokite and the village of Krushuna, which provide opportunities for mountain routes, picnics and observation of flora and fauna.

2. Historical and educational route "The Path of the Revival": Clock Tower → Hadzhistoyan School → Dandolov Houses → St. Prophet Elijah Church – Atanas Moskov House Museum – Dan Kolov House Museum. This route emphasizes the educational and cultural contribution of Sevlievo residents to the development of national identity.

3. Ecotourism route “From Sevlievo to Hotalich”: The center of Sevlievo → archaeological reserve “Hotalich” → natural area “Hotalich meadow”. Suitable for family visits and cultural and educational tourism.

4. Religious route “Spiritual paths of the Sevlievo region”: Church “St. Prophet Elijah” → chapel “St. George” → Dryanovo Monastery → cave “Bacho Kiro”. Its goal is to combine spiritual, pilgrimage and cultural tourism.

In summary of the facts presented, the following conclusion is drawn: cultural, historical and natural geographical heritage stimulate the development of a number of economic sectors, as follows:

1. Tourism: Places of cultural value form tourist packages and routes, which creates employment in the hotel, restaurant and transport industries.

2. Crafts: Traditional crafts – woodcarving, weaving and ceramics – are being revived through festivals and exhibitions that encourage local entrepreneurship.

3. Investment attractiveness: The combination of cultural identity and modern infrastructure attracts investors in the fields of services, logistics and manufacturing (for example, the enterprises around the Sevlievo industrial zone).



Fig. 2. Structure of tourist visits in the municipality of Sevlievo (by type of tourism) (sample data based on regional trends), 2025

Source: Prepared by the author, based on data from the municipality of Sevlievo

The municipality and cultural institutions are developing strategies for integrating cultural heritage into economic policies – through festivals such as "Sevlievo – City of Pumpkin" and/or by supporting initiatives promoting local culture in an international context. This interrelationship shows that culture is not only spiritual capital, but also a very important economic resource that contributes to the sustainable development of the region.

Conclusion. The cultural and historical heritage of the Sevlievo region plays a key role in building its economic identity. It supports the development of tourism, creates opportunities for innovation in cultural industries and strengthens social unity. In this way, Sevlievo demonstrates how the past can become a resource for the future. The social significance and economic effects of cultural and tourist development are closely related to each other and lead to the progressive improvement of the infrastructure and the promotion of local cultural routes. More and more often, especially since 2010, new jobs are being created in the field of hotels, restaurants and services. Youth initiatives and local NGOs in the field of culture and volunteering are becoming more active. There is an improvement in social integration through the participation of the local population in municipal events, festivals and projects. The promotion of local identity is also a source of pride – especially among the younger generations. An example of successful practice is the "Medieval Town of Hotalich" festival, which attracts thousands of visitors and supports local craftsmen and producers.

Among the main challenges are:

Insufficient infrastructure at some tourist sites;

Limited financial resources for restoration and advertising;

The need for digitalization and modern tourist navigation.

The prospects include:

Development of cultural routes in partnership with Gabrovo, Tryavna and Dryanovo;

Introduction of interactive museums and digital guides;

Increasing the participation of the community and schools in cultural and tourism initiatives.

Cultural and tourism sites and routes in Sevlievo represent not only a source of economic revitalization, but also a factor for social cohesion and cultural growth of the community. Investments in this sector can turn Sevlievo into a regional model of sustainable development, in which cultural heritage and social activity intertwine for the benefit of future generations.

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