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Buzludzha Monument Bulgaria

Technical Report

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1. Summary

The Buzludzha Memorial House, or Buzludzha Monument, consists of a unique circular building erected in commemoration of several historical events during the last two centuries. Its interior was decorated with artistic mosaics and the attached tower contains the world's largest illuminated red stars. The Monument was completed in 1981 and dedicated to the glory of Communism, but abandoned after the fall of this regime in 1989. However, it still attracts attention due to its dramatic history, gravity-defying architecture and extraordinary, colourful mosaics.

The purpose of this project is the recovery of the Monument: firstly to return it to a safe condition, and then to bring it into a new life offering the possibility of organising different types of events. The key recommendations identified in this report are as follows:

- The Bulgarian Council of Ministers must decide to which public administration the ownership of the Monument will be transferred, including the responsibility of implementing the project and managing it in the future. In parallel, the Monument must be designated as a Cultural Heritage Monument protected by law.
- The Monument is currently in very bad condition. An immediate preliminary "Emergency Action" should be prepared and rapidly implemented. This action, with an estimated cost near half a million euros plus taxes, could probably be taken and funded by the Bulgarian Government under an emergency initiative.
- The primary target of the project is to convert the Monument into a multi-purpose venue free from any political agenda. It is very important that a team consisting of both experts and stakeholders is created in order to confirm this target and identify future uses.
- A Feasibility study and several Technical studies need to be carried out in order to fine-tune the final design to be implemented, as well as to estimate the investment costs required for the construction, operation and maintenance of the Monument.
- A complete Environmental Impact Assessment should be carried out. The recommendations generated by this process then need to be put into action under the responsibility of the corresponding authority.
- A comprehensive Business plan should be developed in order to assess future sustainability. It should be carried out with the participation of international experts, entailing a multidisciplinary team.
- The overall indicative cost for implementing the project (including the immediate intervention) is currently estimated at 7.5 million euros, plus taxes. Nevertheless, these estimates have to be reviewed and updated in accordance with the results of the Technical studies. In total, between 4 and 5 years would be a reasonable target for successfully completing the project works, which would generate an employment around 600 person*year.
- The operation and management of the project will be the responsibility of the final owner; but the participation of a private, experienced company is likely to be a good solution. It is currently estimated that between 20 and 30 persons could be permanently employed.

- Once the Monument is transferred to public administration, the latter would be responsible for raising the necessary funds for financing the main works, and implementing the project.
- It is expected that the project would be eligible under the regulations of one of the European Structural Funds. Additionally, many other sources should be explored.

In summary: a very challenging project dealing with the recovery of a masterpiece of architecture and crafts, with evident European interest due to its historic significance, its peculiar characteristics and its numerous potential future uses.

2. Purpose and location

The Buzludzha Monument consists of a spherical body, symbolizing a wreath in commemoration of the historical events that happened on Buzludzha Peak during the XIX and XX centuries; while an external attached tower represents a flag decorated with the world's largest illuminated red stars. Its interior was decorated with astonishing artistic mosaics representing both major Bulgarian historic episodes and relevant persons related to the Communist era. Its main original purpose was to show the magnificence of Communist achievements by means of creating a political museum and ceremonial venue.

The Monument (officially “Memorial House of the Bulgarian Communist Party at Buzludzha Peak”) was completed in 1981. This extraordinary building was used for only eight years until the end of the socialist regime in Bulgaria in 1989. Soon after the political changes, Buzludzha was abandoned and became vulnerable to theft, vandalism and severe bad weather conditions. Today the glamour has turned into decay, but the building still attracts attention due to its dramatic history, gravity-defying architecture and extraordinary, colourful mosaics.

The primary purpose of this project is the recovery of the Monument, firstly to return it to a safe and usable condition, and then to bring it into a new life offering the possibility of organising cultural/touristic visits and many other types of events (e.g. seminars, concerts, exhibitions). The basic intention is not to restore it completely back to its original status but to adapt it to new attractive uses, making visible, to the extent it is possible, the degradation it has suffered over recent years (in particular in relation to the interior mosaics). Notwithstanding, it has to be noted that a crucial target of this project is to keep the Monument out of future political controversies.

The Buzludzha Monument is located on a mountain peak of the Central Balkan chain, at an altitude of 1432 m. Together with the Shipka Monument, it represents one of the two most iconic monuments of the “National Park Museum of Shipka–Buzludzha”. The park has a dual purpose: historic memory and natural/environmental protection. Administratively, Buzludzha belongs to the Regional Administration of Stara Zagora and is situated on the territory of Kazanlak Municipality.

3. Context and history

Bulgaria was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire after the end of the 14th century (please refer to Annex B for more details). By the second half of the 19th century a strong revolutionary movement was growing in the country. Two of Bulgaria's most famous revolutionary leaders (Hadzhi Dimitar and Stefan Karadzha) formed a rebel detachment launching a series of attacks on Ottoman strongholds, culminating in a final battle fought at Buzludzha Peak in July 1868. The rebels were defeated but their actions entered Bulgarian history as a symbol of heroism and self-sacrifice in the name of freedom.

The first socialist groups in Bulgaria had begun meeting by 1886. The first socialist congress was held in 1891 at Buzludzha Peak, resulting in the official formation of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Workers' Party; a precursor to the Bulgarian Communist Party.

In summary, Buzludzha Peak has a profound significance to Bulgarian history and national identity, due to the dramatic and diverse events that have taken place there since the mid-19th century.

By the mid-1950s the government decided to launch a contest to design a memorial on Buzludzha Peak, in recognition of this significance. The Buzludzha Monument was intended to be larger and more impressive than any other. The main requirement centred around the idea of a red star, to be placed right up on the mountain peak. The competition bid was won by Georgi Stoilov, by that time a young but already recognized Bulgarian architect whose previous work included the design of a new hotel in Sofia and several tourist resorts at the Black Sea coast. However, it took 15 years from the decision to build a monument on Buzludzha, until the construction actually began.

The construction of Buzludzha was financed with public donations, with the intent that it would become a nationwide cause. Due to its structural complexity and the limited working period allowed by inclement winter weather, the project took more than seven years (January 1974–August 1981). Over 6,000 people laboured on the monument, including some of Bulgaria's finest architects, artists, sculptors and engineers.

During the Monument's eight years of use it was visited by more than 2 million people, serving as a political museum and ceremonial venue. After the political changes in 1989, the new democratic government had no interest in maintaining the most significant symbol of the previous ideology and the Monument was abandoned. Today the Monument is a ruin but its unique design and extraordinary art work has earned it international fame as "one of the most beautiful abandoned places in the world". The long years of looting, vandalism and neglect have delivered it to its present ruined condition. However, the structure seems to remain sound and much of its mosaics are still intact. The resilience of construction, sustained level of tourism and strong public and political opinion, together indicate that there is hope the building can still be put to new use.

In 2015 the Monument received a 'Certificate of Excellence' from TripAdvisor. In the last few years, photos of Buzludzha have appeared on the front cover of numerous best-selling books about abandoned places. Meanwhile, many of the largest worldwide news outlets have featured a story about the Monument.¹ This is in part a consequence of the campaign carried out by the Buzludzha Project Foundation and the announcement of the Monument being shortlisted as one of Europa Nostra's "7 Most Endangered" sites.

Local communities typically have personal (though not necessarily political) attachments to the site. Every adult from the nearby towns has first-hand or family memory regarding the construction and the utilization of the Monument. For them, the neglected Monument becomes a symbol of embarrassment, and disrespect to the people who worked on it. They understand Buzludzha as a part of Bulgarian history, a national achievement, and truly want to see it preserved. Younger generations are often particularly enthusiastic about having such a unique attraction in their region, and many have offered their help with the site's preservation.

4. Current situation

With its striking architectural form, advanced lighting system, unique acoustics and more than 1,000 m² of storytelling mosaic panels, Buzludzha's design represented a remarkable synthesis of architecture and monumental art. The mosaics decorate both the so-called inner and outer ring.

¹ This includes BBC World News, Agency France Press, National Geographic, Reuters, The Discovery Channel, CNN, The Guardian, The Independent, The New York Times, The Daily Mail, Der Spiegel, The Washington Post, BuzzFeed, The Economist, VICE Media and The Calvert Journal, in addition to many other international and local news sources.

The inner ring mosaics represent significant historical events and characters from the period of Socialism; while the outer ring mosaics show different aspects of the Communist society (some examples of mosaics, as well as pictures detailing the original and current status of the Monument, can be found in Annex A).

The Monument is a unique engineering achievement, featuring a free-spanning steel roof and a saucer-shaped body with 20 m overhangs, suspended at only three points. The materials used (fair-faced concrete façade, white marble, granite plates and red velvet interiors) contributed to the strong impact of the Monument. Moreover, it is a prime and iconic example of the Brutalist style of architecture which is currently enjoying a worldwide renaissance in interest and appreciation, making this the perfect time to reassess Buzludzha as a depoliticised achievement in architecture and engineering.

The current physical status and main problems of the Monument (primarily identified by the Buzludzha Project Foundation; ref. Annex C) are as follows:

- **Roof.** The roof structure weighs 640 tons and its diameter reaches 60 m. Despite the severe weather conditions, it remains stable and complete, though slightly damaged by rust. The top layer of copper plating is missing entirely, which has allowed rain damage to the insulation material and wooden structure beneath. Numerous gaping holes in the roof contribute to the rapid decay.
- **Reinforced concrete.** At first glance the Monument appears to be structurally sound. However, upon inspection, water can be seen dripping from cracks in the concrete façade. Constructive laboratory evaluation is required to estimate the quality and stability of the concrete.
- **Mosaics.** The inner ring of the main hall is decorated with a 42-colour mosaic. Some 35 tons of Ukrainian-made enamel was used in its creation, and currently approximately 20% is destroyed. The outer ring is made of natural stones collected from Bulgarian rivers and today only around 50% remains, and is severely deteriorated by its exposure to the sun. Many parts of the remaining mosaics are unstable, and fall apart if touched.
- **Stairs.** The three staircases are stable, with only minor damage to the concrete. The majority of the granite plates, which once covered the stairs, are missing. The walls of the staircases, the foyer and the basement are covered with white glitz marble, slightly discoloured, but in good condition.
- **Tower.** The 70 m attached tower appears structurally sound. The red ruby glass of the two 12 m stars is broken and around 50% of it is missing. Under these circumstances, the seismic risk of the tower, and in general of the entire Monument, needs to be checked.
- **Looting.** The sound and light systems, and the 175 electrical heaters, were stolen. The windows and their frames are completely missing. The massive doors, many metal beams, and metal coverings were cut off and sold for scrap. The white marble in the ritual hall has yellowed, but it is still there; unlike in the outer corridor where it was stripped out to be reused in housing projects.
- **Current use.** The Monument is not inhabited or used in any formal capacity, though it provokes sustained tourism interest with an estimated 100+ visitors each day. Foreigners often describe the Buzludzha Monument as one of the most impressive things to see in Bulgaria. Because the

building is constantly decaying, it can be dangerous for visitors. In order to prevent fatal injuries, the responsible authorities have welded shut the doors and recently introduced 24/7 on-site police security.

Overall, time is the greatest threat, as the Monument is currently abandoned to decay. Every day the cracks in the concrete are deepening, the roof covering is collapsing and the mosaics are falling apart. Winter is particularly damaging (wind, snow and rain enter through the gaping holes in the roof and through the missing windows) causing dramatic destruction to the artwork inside. The Monument drips moisture all year round, due to the huge amount of trapped water inside. On top of that, enormous quantities of waste and debris are being continuously accumulated inside the building, generating potential risks to health and safety.

5. Immediate intervention

Against this background, an immediate “Emergency Action” should be designed, planned and implemented to protect the building from further deterioration. As a minimum requirement, the building should be made weather-proof to ensure no water penetration through the roof or the windows to avoid further damage.

If corrective measures are not taken promptly, the first irreparable loss will be the mosaics. The two walls bearing the mosaic panels are supported on light steel structures, which are entirely rusted. Their condition is so bad that they cannot be restored, but need to be replaced. These structures may collapse within the next few years, which would cause the destruction of all mosaics.

The next intervention deals with the roof. Its steel construction is slightly rusted, but still seems to be structurally sound and might be restored. Within a decade the steel roof may collapse which would destroy the rest of the central hall. The concrete structure, despite its cracks, is likely to be standing for longer, though it should be tested for ‘concrete cancer’ and the structural integrity of the steel reinforcement. The next element at risk of collapse is the 70 m tower: which measures only 5 m across at its base and faces severe winds every day. Overall, these preliminary impressions cannot be assured for long and an independent expert opinion is necessary as soon as possible.

This action could probably be taken and funded by the Bulgarian Government under an emergency initiative. The action would deal with cleaning and debris removal, demolition of dangerous elements, halting decay and preparing the site to safely receive visitors. A pre-condition would involve carrying out a technical assessment to evaluate the current status of the building, and defining the best solutions for its minimum conservation under safe conditions.

Activities to be carried out either before or during this emergency action are as follows:

- Designation of the building as a National Monument.
- Decision of the Government to transfer the Monument to the Ministry of Culture or, alternatively, to another public administration (i.e. Regional Administration of Stara Zagora or Municipality of Kazanlak).
- Technical assessment of the current condition of the Monument in order to define and assess the costs of these urgent actions.

- Basic repair activities:
 - (i) Cleaning the interior and managing waste.
 - (ii) Demolition of elements at risk or unnecessary to future use.
 - (iii) Urgent mosaic repairs.
 - (iv) Replacement of windows.
 - (v) Covering the roof
 - (vi) Other complementary measures to secure the building's condition, including temporary protection against bad weather conditions

The cost of this urgent action is currently estimated at roughly 500,000 euros plus taxes (ref. Annex D; to be confirmed by means of a primary technical assessment).

6. Description of the project

The basic objective of the Buzludzha project is the recovery/revitalization of the Monument. The intention is not to bring it back to its initial condition in 1981 but to adapt it to new uses, safely maintaining the mosaics in their current status.

In principle, the main symbolic communist elements (e.g., the stars, the sculpted text on the main façade and the central hall ceiling medallion) should be retained, but not enhanced. All iconography which survives is retained for its architectural/artistic/craft value, in a way not dissimilar to a decommissioned church can retain iconography without promoting religion. The presentation, story and interpretation of the Monument, whatever its new uses and management, should explain to future visitors that the iconography and designs are not retained to promote the socialist period but to set it within the broader context of the Bulgarian history over the last two centuries.

First of all, a full Feasibility study must be conducted, including architectural scanning and surveying materials and structural integrity to fully evaluate the building's current condition, conservation needs and priorities. This will clarify viability and provide the essential methodology for the repair of the building. In parallel, discussions with different stakeholders (including local and international experts, students and civil society) should be organized in order to specify the potential future uses of the Monument.

Against this background, the definitive restoration project can be divided into the following main phases:

- The Feasibility study would consist of the development of a definitive design concept for the future use of the Monument, allowing it to be shaped through public discussion. As a basic starting point, the study may consider the design proposal created by the Buzludzha Project Foundation, which is to go beyond converting the Monument into a standard museum and providing a contemporary interpretation of what the Monument means. That is, to offer something creative, interactive and innovative enough to connect with the spirit of the artistic skills that characterise Buzludzha (to be elucidated through the discussions on its future potential uses).
- At the same time, the plan is for the Monument to become a place for gatherings that aim to reinforce the contemporary (post-communist) cultural identity of Bulgaria. Giving the Monument

this new complementary purpose, free from political agenda, would allow people to unite around the idea that historical and cultural Monuments can be preserved through creative reuse.

- In parallel, a comprehensive Business plan should be developed in order to assess to what extent the final product would be sustainable in the future. The contents of this Business plan are detailed in paragraph 11.
- Several Technical studies need to be carried out in order to identify and design the plan to be adopted, as well as to forecast the cost for construction, operation and maintenance of the Monument. A detailed risk analysis, together with a project implementation plan and a strategy for procuring the works, should also be prepared.
- The next stage, once funds are secured, is to conduct the required works. In addition to the main building, the tower should also be rehabilitated with the addition of an external panoramic glass elevator; giving visitors the opportunity to explore, though an open deck at the top of the tower, some spectacular views across the Balkan range.
- It is to be noted that even after preliminary studies, this project should expect the unexpected. It is feasible that new challenges will arise as the work begins, and as more of the structure is revealed. This needs to be clearly acknowledged in the site control and management arrangements. Also, further technical checks on concrete quality, stability, etc., should be implemented at the design or even at the feasibility stage, rather than waiting until construction commences.

In general, the approach should be pragmatic, maintaining the spirit of the original concept while allowing modernisation to current standards and expectations. It is a challenging project that will require adequate time and considerable specialist expertise.

7. Implementation

It is first of all crucial to settle the question of the Monument's ownership. Although it is located in the National Park Museum of Shipka–Buzludzha (managed by the Ministry of Culture) the monument is currently managed by the Regional Administration of Stara Zagora. The Bulgarian Council of Ministers must decide to which public administration the Monument is to be transferred, together with the responsibility of managing it in future. In parallel, the Monument must be designated as being of national interest as a cultural heritage monument protected by Bulgarian law, in order to have access to European Funds.

Against this background it seems both likely and logical that the final responsibility will land with the Ministry of Culture. Other possibilities would be the Regional Administration of Stara Zagora or the Municipality of Kazanlak (who may also have access to European Cohesion Funds). Privatisation of the Monument seems to be completely out of discussion, and private ownership or concession is highly not recommendable as it would result in no direct control over the future use and content of the Monument. Nevertheless, private management of the Monument by an expert/specialized company during the operational phase is likely to be considered/recommended on the basis of the Business plan.

Under these circumstances, and the number of questions to be solved, it is not yet realistic to establish a detailed plan for completing the project. Notwithstanding, after clarifying the ownership, a realistic – though approximate – schedule for completing the works might look as follows:

Task	Timeframe
Technical assessment of the current status and implementation of urgent measures	12 months (subject to weather conditions)
Stakeholder discussions to define final uses	6 months
Preparation of Feasibility study	6-8 months
Preparation of Business plan	6-8 months (in parallel)
Technical design of the architectural solution	8-12 months
Implementation of works	24-36 months (subject to weather conditions and unexpected contingencies)

In total, a period of 4-5 years would be reasonably necessary for completing the works.

8. Procurement

These major design and construction works will need to be put out to appropriate tendering procedures following the EU Directives. The threshold value requiring international tender for service contracts is € 144,000, and for public works, € 5.55 million. All public authorities within the EU are obliged to follow the provisions of these EU Directives.

9. Environmental and social impacts

Environmental Context

The Monument is located in the National Park Museum Shipka-Buzludzha, but does not receive any attention or care by this authority, because administratively it is not part of it (ref. Annex E). Current visitors to the Monument are leaving litter, graffiti, and otherwise fouling the place. If a temporary functional visitor centre, waste disposal facilities, toilets and security were put in place, the natural surroundings would be much better preserved. On top of that, a wind farm on the outskirts of the park, but clearly visible from the entrance of the Monument, generates an unpleasant visual impact.

Parts of the National Park Museum Shipka-Buzludzha, including the Monument of Liberty Shipka, but not including Buzludzha Monument, are located in the Natural Park Bulgarka. The main purpose of the park is re-establishing, preserving and maintaining natural beech and the springs of the Yantra River. A total of 80% of the park area is forested, most of it beech. This includes some rare habitats whose conservation has pan-European significance within the Natura 2000 network. Over 1,800 species are established in the higher regions of the park, of which 32 are endemic. Forests and subalpine pastures are inhabited by a great number of invertebrates and vertebrates, including many bird species. The ancient bush forests are a safe refuge for brown bear, boar, deer, wolf, martin, nine species of bat, and many others. In summary, the park is a valuable eco-habitat hosting vast bio-diversity.

Should the Monument form part of the park, it could begin to benefit from special protection related to the park's regulation. Moreover, if the Ministry of Culture take responsibility of the Monument, a much more ambitious project could be developed. Indeed, the ministry would be very happy using European Funds to implement a comprehensive project for the whole park including many non-existing features and facilities, like an integral fire prevention system, new tourism infrastructure (e.g. hotels and restaurants), and the inclusion/promotion of the park as part of international cultural routes. This would mean a very ambitious program, which could include the Buzludzha project, but would require discussions outside the scope of this report (to be further considered if the idea materialises).

Social impacts

The Buzludzha project would not only generate new tourism revenue, but would also support local businesses in a region that is economically challenged despite hosting a wealth of cultural assets.

The preservation of Buzludzha would recognise the contributions of many Bulgarians, their parents and grandparents, who either worked on the project or supported it through donations; while providing a venue for contemporary cultural events that might enrich everyday local life. The conservation of Buzludzha would represent a crucial new step towards opening dialogue about the recent past. Providing an honest and open forum, it would further encourage the country to move beyond shame and anger, personal nostalgia or bitterness. The project could be an example and promise of potential preservation of other currently neglected artefacts from the socialist period in Bulgaria, and in Eastern Europe and might open the door for reassessing other heritage sites in terms of education, conservation and reuse.

Environmental impact assessment

From the administrative standpoint, due to the exceptional character and location of the project, a complete Environmental Impact Assessment – following the procedures established in the European Directives – should be carried out. Standard rules include the preparation of impact studies, a public consultation and issuing a final environmental impact statement by the relevant authority. The recommendations generated by this process have to be put in action under the responsibility and supervision of the corresponding authority.

During construction (both during the urgent interventions and main works) the most relevant negative impacts requiring mitigation measures are likely to be: waste management including recycling, noise and dust generation, and the prevention of leakage. During the operation period it will be necessary to develop a waste management strategy and, on the occasion of massive attended events, it will be required to put in place very severe measures to minimize negative environmental impacts and to adopt some compensation measures in the natural surroundings and access (to be analysed on a case by case basis).

10. Investment cost

Preliminary cost estimates have been prepared on the basis of an exercise carried out in 2014; and additionally through experience of other restoration projects appraised by the European Investment Bank in recent years. These estimates have been prepared with the assumption that the concrete structure and elements are not suffering from any unusual difficulties (e.g. aluminosis, irreparable material damage, or structural defects), which might require much higher costs.

Additionally, it must be taken into account that the local unitary costs may considerably vary before the final project can be implemented. For that reason these estimates, including quantities of every component of the project, must be reviewed in depth and updated in the Feasibility study.

Noting these caveats, current estimations give the following figures before tax (see Annex D for details):

Total cost for urgent interventions	€ 0.5 million euros
Total cost for the project	€ 7 million euros

Therefore, the global currently estimated amount of funds to be mobilized is around 7.5 million euro, plus taxes (to be confirmed). This would generate an employment for around 600 people per year.

11. Operation and maintenance

The operation and management of the project will be the responsibility of the final owner. The scope of operation will cover the permanent activities as well as the organization and/or the supervision of occasional events, both externally and within the interior of the building (main hall and corridors), including the tower. Ensuring successful results would require considerable promotional and technical inputs that would need special marketing studies and a special unit may need to be established for this particular purpose.

Regular maintenance of the building is important to keep it in a good state after the restoration. The owner would have responsibility for this and should set up a programme and allocate a budget to ensure it is done correctly, well before the project would be completed. Indicatively 3–5% of investment cost may be required annually for maintenance.

These activities may be delegated to a private operator having extensive experience in the management of such a complex building, both from the technical and administrative standpoints. It is currently estimated that between 20 and 30 persons would be necessary to ensure the correct operation and maintenance of the building.

12. Business plan

In order to verify the viability of the project, it is necessary to prepare a sound Business plan, which should incorporate the participation of diverse international experts and should cover, at least, the following elements:

Feasibility and Technical studies

After arriving at an agreement on the future uses of the Monument, and in order to understand the current problems, challenges to be faced and solutions to be adopted, it is necessary to carry out the Feasibility study, including the full design of the main works to be carried out ('the project') and a risk assessment with the identification of major measures to mitigate them;

- Technical studies on the status of the Monument and identification of technical solutions to be adopted for its recovery
- Final design of the adopted technical solution
- Preparation of an environmental impact analysis, including mitigation measures during construction and best practice actions during operation
- Strategy for carrying out the procurement of the works
- Strategy for implementation of the project, following the specifications of the final design and the environmental impact conditions
- Assessment of the necessary investment costs for the construction of the project
- Assessment of the annual costs for the operation and maintenance of the Monument, including the identification of all required personnel
- Technical risks assessment, both during the preparation and construction phases of the project, in order to minimize cost overruns and unexpected delays; and including the identification of major eventual mitigation and rectification measures
- Preparation of a marketing study, including:
 - Analysis of potential demand, including tourist and local visitors
 - Definition of tariffs and identification of potential subsidies
 - Characterisation of main types of potential events to be organised
 - Preparation of dissemination materials using different physical or digital/electronic support, and media
 - Inclusion of the Monument in national and international cultural databases and networks
 - Marketing campaign
- Identification of potential sources for financing the project (fundraising).

Economic and Financial analysis

In order to assess the economic/financial viability of the project, it is necessary to carry out an economic and financial analysis, which should result in the preparation of a cash-flow model covering at least 25 years (5 for preparation and implementation; 20 for operation).

The main costs to be considered (per each year) in the economic cost/benefit analysis are:

- Preparation and supervision costs (project design, management and quality control)
- Investment costs related to urgent intervention
- Investment costs for the main works (the core of the project)
- Operation and maintenance costs
- Major repairs, renewals and/or improvements over the asset's life

While the main economic (intangible) benefits are basically related to: (i) the generation of employment (both during construction and during operation), (ii) environmental benefits (e.g. improvement of natural resources and/or reduction of environmental negative impacts), (iii) tourism attraction to the region and creation of indirect new business, and (iv) visibility of the importance of the Monument and its surrounding environment.

The costs to be considered for the financial analysis should include all those forming part of the economic analysis, plus the reimbursement of loans and other financial products (i.e. interest and capital; guarantees; insurances and taxes). In terms of financial analysis the tangible benefits the project would generate are: (i) revenues from tariffs paid by visitors, (ii) incomes generated by the organization of special events, (iii) revenues produced by other directly related activities (e.g. expositions, merchandising), and (iv) subsidies and grants.

13. Financing possibilities

The funding for the urgent interventions might be assured by the Government from its budget, under an emergency remedy initiative. Once the Monument is transferred to a public administration, the latter would be responsible for raising the necessary funds for financing the main works. It is foreseen that the project would be eligible under the regulations of one of the European Structural Funds, most likely the European Regional Development Fund or the European Cohesion Fund. Eligibility criteria would be justified as contributing to regional development, cultural tourism promotion, environmental protection and rural development in deprived areas. It has to be noted that, if Bulgarian authorities are interested in managing and completing the funding of the project, the EIB-JASPERS facility could provide technical support (free of charges) for the preparation of the Application Form necessary to obtain European Funds.

On top of that, public funds from the Government and/or other public Bulgarian administrations will, in any case, be necessary to complement eventual European funds. The required final amount will obviously depend on the latter. Finally, the possibility of obtaining funds from different international organizations (e.g. loans from the EIB or other IFI; grants from donators like the Norwegian/EFTA funds or other foundations) should also be explored.

14. Conclusion: Proposed actions and recommendations

This is an iconic building in a key location having national and European significance. The project presents a challenging agenda for a worthwhile objective. Under these circumstances, several proposals for its preservation and future utilization arise as follows:

- It is first of all crucial to elucidate the question of the ownership of the Monument and, in parallel, the Monument must be designated as being of National Interest as a Cultural Heritage Monument protected by law.

- As far as the Monument is currently abandoned to decay, an immediate preliminary intervention should be designed, planned and implemented to protect the building from further deterioration. This action, with an estimated cost near half a million euros plus taxes, could probably be taken and funded by the Government under an emergency initiative.
- The first activity of the Buzludzha project would consist of the development of a definitive concept about the future use of the Monument. The basic primary idea is to convert the Monument into a museum engaging in the spirit of the artistic skills that characterise Buzludzha, free from any political agenda (to be confirmed/refined).
- Before putting in place any rehabilitation intervention, a Feasibility study and several Technical studies will be necessarily be carried out in order to identify and design the final plan to be adopted, as well as to estimate the investment cost required for the construction, operation and maintenance of the Monument.
- Studies related to risk analysis, the identification of works' procurement strategy and a project implementation plan have also to be prepared.
- Due to the particular environment in which the Monument is located, and the special characteristics of the building, a complete Environmental Impact Assessment following the procedures established in the European Directives should be carried out. The recommendations generated by this process have to be put in action under the responsibility of the corresponding authority.
- To complete the preparation of the project, a comprehensive Business plan should be developed in order to assess to what extent the final product would be sustainable in the future. The participation of international experts, entailing a multidisciplinary team, should be an important requirement.
- Preliminary total cost estimates, amounting to some € 7.5 million plus taxes, have been prepared for the purpose of this document, which would generate an employment for around 600 people per year. Nevertheless, these estimates have to be reviewed in detail and updated in the Feasibility and Technical studies.
- In total, and depending on tough meteorological constraints, it seems reasonable to expect the project works could be completed over a period lasting between 4 and 5 years.
- The operation and management of the project will be the responsibility of the final owner. Nevertheless, these activities may be delegated to a private operator having extensive experience in the management of such a complex building, both from the technical and administrative standpoints.
- Once the Monument is transferred to a public administration, the latter would be responsible for raising the necessary funds for financing the main works and to carry out the implementation of the project.

- It is reasonably foreseen that the project would be eligible under the regulations of one of the European Structural Funds. Eligibility criteria would be justified as contributing to regional development, cultural tourism promotion, environmental protection and rural development in deprived areas. Nevertheless, other national and international sources should also be explored.

To summarise, a very stimulating project related to the revitalization of an iconic monument immersed in a singular environment, and offering great future opportunities from cultural, tourism and socio-economic points of view.

LOCATION AND PICTURES



Google maps



Picture by Mario Aymerich

The Atrium, original shape and current status



Picture by Bedros Azinyan

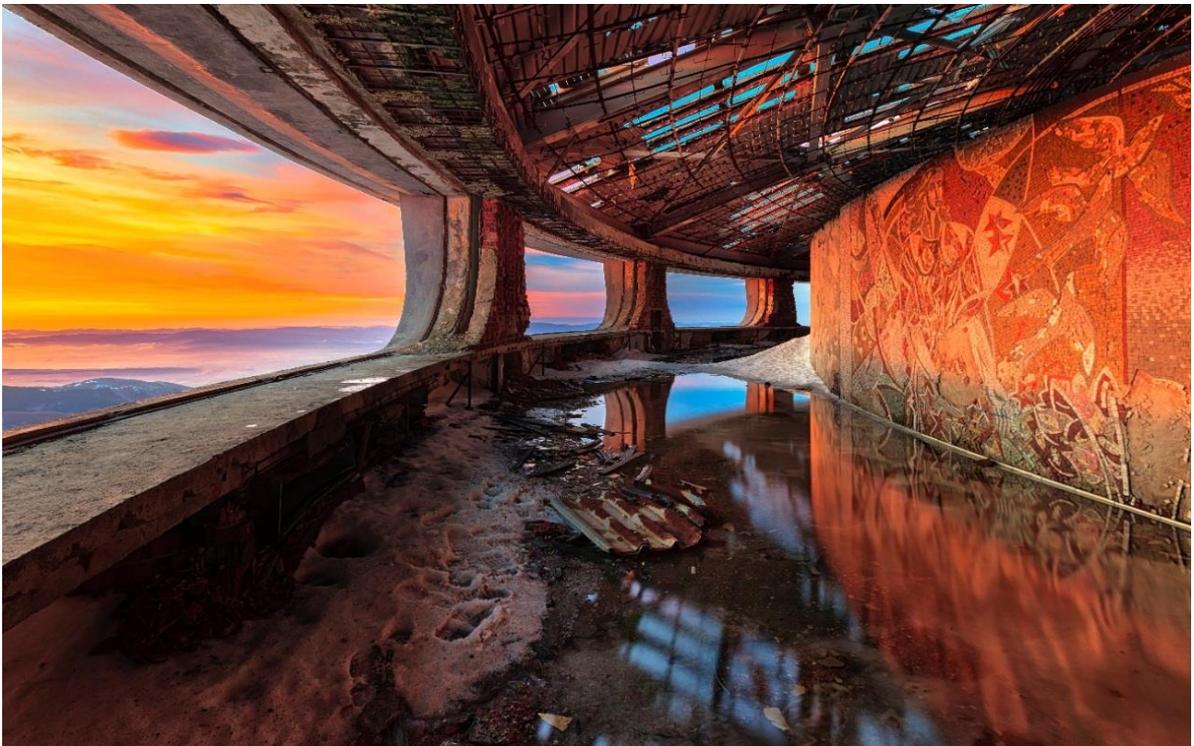


Picture by Dora Ivanova

The External Gallery, original shape and current status



Picture by Bedros Azinyan



Picture by Evgeni Dinev

The Main Entrance today (exterior and interior)



Picture by Les Johnstone



Picture by Nicola Miller

HISTORY OF BUZLUDHZA PEAK

(source: History of Buzludzha Peak, by Richard F. Morten, 2018, adapted by Dora Ivanova)

The Buzludzha Memorial House (the Monument) was opened in August 1981, commemorating a location with great significance in Bulgarian history. Three key historic events are linked to this mountain peak: the 1868 last fight of the Hadzhi Dimitâr' rebels, a WWII-era battle between fascists and partisan forces, and the foundation of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Workers Party in 1891.

1868: THE LAST FIGHT OF HADZHI DIMITAR'S REBELS

In 1396 the Second Bulgarian Empire – a medieval state stretching all the way from the Black Sea to the Adriatic – was invaded by the Ottoman Empire. Bulgaria remained under Ottoman control for almost five centuries, but during the second half of the 19th century a strong revolutionary movement was growing in the country.

Two of Bulgaria's most famous revolutionaries, Hadzhi Dimitâr and Stefan Karadzha, formed a rebel detachment in Romania in 1868, before crossing the Danube and launching a series of attacks on Ottoman strongholds in Bulgaria. Their campaign enjoyed some early victories, until 9th July when Karadzha was injured in battle and taken prisoner by the Ottomans. Hadzhi Dimitâr led the remaining rebels in one last battle, fought at Buzludzha Peak on 18th July 1868.

This dramatic fight was important not because of its scale or outcome, but because of the courage and self-sacrifice of the rebels. Although they knew that this will be their last fight, they consciously preferred dying rather than surrendering. This act of heroism attracted the attention of Europe and showed the world that Bulgarians were dedicated to the cause of freedom.



1877-78: THE BATTLES FOR SHIPKA PASS

In April 1876, Bulgaria erupted into a nationwide revolt against Ottoman rule. The revolution was swiftly put down by Ottoman forces, and entire towns were massacred as punishment for their rebellion – but these bloody events soon caught the attention of the world and in 1877, Tsar Alexander II of Russia began deploying his troops in the Balkans. One of the most decisive campaigns of that war was fought just 10km from Buzludzha, in the Shipka Pass.

The defence of the “Shipka Pass” was one of the most heroic and decisive battles during the Russian-Turkish War of Liberation 1877-1878. The combats that took place from 09/21 to 13/26 August 1877 between the pass defenders and the Turkish army, entered the Bulgarian history under the name of the Shipka Epopee.

The task of the small-number Russian-Bulgarian detachment under the command of Gen. N.G. Stoletov, about 7,500 people strong, was to deter the Suleiman Pasha army that was overpowering it by its numbers (approx. 27,000 people and a reserve of 10,000), and not allow it to cross the Balkan Mountains and join forces with the Turkish units in North-East Bulgaria, in help of the Osman Pasha army besieged in Pleven.

The defence of Shipka continued also during the autumn and the winter of 1877. That period went down in history as the “Winter Shipka Standing”. In spite of the cold and fog, in spite of the snow-storms and blizzards, the Shipka defenders guarded heroically the pass.

Although the 1981 Buzludzha Memorial House was never explicitly dedicated to the battles in the Shipka Pass, it nevertheless built on a strong sense of Bulgarian nationalism already tied to this mountain location – and both Monuments are now co-represented by the National Park-Museum Shipka-Buzludzha.

1891: THE DAWN OF BULGARIAN SOCIALISM

The first socialist groups in Bulgaria had begun meeting by 1886. The political philosopher Dimitâr Blagoev was instrumental in shaping Bulgaria's socialist movement. He published the first Bulgarian-language translations of books such as Karl Marx's Capital and The Communist Manifesto, in addition to his own influential work “What is Socialism and Does it Have Roots in Our Country?”

In 1891, when Blagoev decided to unite these different factions into one Bulgarian socialist organisation, Buzludzha made the logical meeting place – a discrete and convenient location, already steeped in national significance. The annual celebration commemorating the sacrifice of Hadzi Dimitâr was used as cover for bringing together some of the nation's most prominent socialist groups.

Bulgaria's first socialist congress (as the gathering would later be known) was held on 2nd August 1891 at Buzludzha Peak, resulting in the official formation of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Workers' Party: a precursor to the Bulgarian Communist Party, who would later seize complete control over the country.

1898: THE BUZLUDZHA LODGE

By the late 19th century many Bulgarians were already making the pilgrimage to Buzludzha Peak. In 1898 Bishop Kusevich of Stara Zagora proposed the creation of a Monument at the site – an obelisk with a cross, a chapel, and memorial gardens commemorating the sacrifice of Hadzhi Dimitâr's brigade. An 8-metre statue of Hadzhi Dimitâr was planned too, overlooking the mountain. The reign of Tsar Ferdinand was beset by economic crises however, and the project was never completed.

The first memorial project on Buzludzha Peak to reach completion was a guest house, the 'Buzludzha Lodge,' that was opened in 1936. The building was created to accommodate the many visitors who by then were already travelling to Buzludzha Peak in order to pay their respects to Hadzhi Dimitâr and his detachment. The completion of the Buzludzha Lodge was intended to facilitate educational tourism in the region.

1944: THE PARTISAN MOVEMENT

During WWII, Bulgaria was brought onto the side of Nazi Germany... much to the protest of many of her citizens. A nationwide partisan resistance movement was organised, in which the Bulgarian Social Democratic Workers Party – by then known as the Bulgarian Communist Party – took a significant leading role.

On 25th January 1944, partisan detachments from the towns of Gabrovo and Sevlievo ambushed fascist forces engaged in training exercises on Buzludzha Peak. A fierce firefight ensued, during which three partisans lost their lives. In September 1944 the Soviet Red Army entered Bulgaria as they pushed the Nazi forces back out of Eastern Europe. The victorious partisans formed a coalition government over the following years, with the Bulgarian Communist Party swiftly taking the lead. In 1946 a national referendum abolished the monarchy, and a single-party system was established.

The new regime erected many Monuments to celebrate the victory of Bulgarian socialism. In particular, Buzludzha Peak was considered a highly significant location, as the birthplace of the socialist movement in Bulgaria. On 29th January 1959, a competition was announced that would welcome design proposals for four new Monuments celebrating the history of this mountain.

1961: 70 YEARS OF SOCIALISM

On 2nd July 1961 – 70 years after the foundation of Bulgaria's first socialist organisation – three out of four of the Monuments were unveiled: a statue of Hadzhi Dimitâr, an engraved relief of Dimitâr Blagoev's 1981 Buzludzha Congress, and a Monument dedicated to the Gabrovo and Sevlievo partisan forces who had battled fascists here during WWII.

The Buzludzha Monument was intended to be larger and more impressive than the others – the specification was for a red star, placed right up on the mountain peak. The competition bid was won by Georgi Stoilov, a young Bulgarian architect whose previous work included the design of a new hotel in Sofia and several tourist resorts at the Black Sea coast.

INITIAL PRESERVATION DESIGN PROJECT

Created by the Buzludzha Project Foundation, thanks to which the project has achieved a good basis for further development (source: www.buzludzha-monument.com/project).

The Buzludzha Project is a design proposal for the conservation of the Buzludzha Memorial House. The project was created by the Bulgarian architect Dora Ivanova, who initially presented and defended it for her 2014 master's thesis in architecture at the Technical University of Berlin. The proposal has since been developed to incorporate feedback gathered during the dozens of public discussions organised and chaired by the author between 2015 and 2018.



The Buzludzha Monument is unique in terms of its history, architecture and art. Even in its current decayed condition, thousands of people travel from around the world to visit the site – and many of them are left with unanswered questions: How and why was such a structure built? What was it used for? What do the mosaics represent? How was it destroyed and why? Preserved in the form of a museum, Buzludzha will provide answers to all of those questions.

The Buzludzha Memorial House was built to celebrate the Bulgarian Communist Party – and so any painstaking, loving recreation of the monument in its original form could give the impression of celebrating those same ideologies. We don't want to do that. But neither will this project adapt or repurpose the monument, forgetting or disguising its original intention.

What we want is to preserve this unique work of architecture, while offering a critical and objective explanation of its history and purpose. We believe that traumatic history should never be forgotten... but instead be remembered, explained, discussed, and used as a basis for further education.

The Buzludzha Project will:

Not rewrite, not celebrate, but *explain* the monument's history.

Not hide, not honour, but *remember* the monument's purpose.

Not transform, not restore, but *preserve* the monument's design.

Structural Layout

The Saucer

Main Hall: Ideology

Corridor: Oppression

Outer Ring: Everyday Life

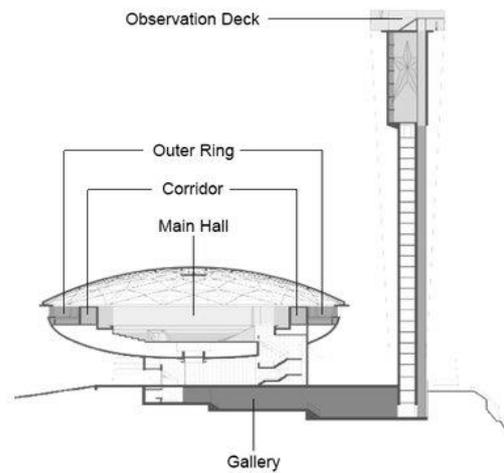
Basement

Gallery: The Monument

Tower

Elevator: Star Chamber

Observation Deck: Panorama



The Spaces

The main hall will be used for cultural, historical, educational, arts and music events. The auditorium design, as it currently stands, can host up to 500 people. Such small and middle scale events can have local, but also national and international public and significance.



Moreover, the main hall will feature an objective and critical explanation of the inner mosaics. They will be preserved in their current state and the 20% of missing places will not be restored. The mosaics detail key historical events and personalities from the communist period, and will be used to explain not only the ideas behind communism, but also the propaganda myths that the system created about itself.

The corridor between the inner and the outer mosaic rings will be dedicated to the political and social repressions under Bulgaria's communist government. Visitors will learn about the prisons, dossiers, internal security force through documents and stories of dissidents. The corridor is the space between the inner and the outer mosaic ring exactly as the repressions are the gap between the official narrative of "ideology" and "reality".

The outer ring of mosaics presents scenes of everyday life during communism. It depicts objective facts and events such as industrialization of the country, the role of the women in the communist society, the children care and education, the culture, the foreign policy etc. All those images are important aspects of the communist state and should be explained objectively, including both their positive and negative impacts.

The monument's basement will be developed to offer a narrative of the monument itself, with a **gallery** that spans from the history of Buzludzha Peak through to the planning, construction and utilization of the monument in the 20th century to its decline, and of course, its preservation. The collection will incorporate: original design sketches for the mosaics, the building's blueprints, archive records and photography.

A **glass elevator** ascending the 70m tower provides visitors with dramatic views over the mountains. It will pass through the chamber between the 12m red stars, with this space being cleared to allow unhindered views from the interior. Roughly 50% of the red glass is missing and will not be restored; however, the extraordinary space is secured and insulated. Here visitors can learn about other communist-era monuments in Bulgaria.

The panoramic **observation deck** at the top of the tower will provide exceptional 360-degree views across the surrounding landscape. A map of the region will point out a number of other nearby attractions which may be viewed through the installed telescopes. On a clear day, the view stretches more than 100km. On the lower indoor space a glass 'sky-walk' allow braver visitors to walk out beyond the overhang for a dizzying downward view.

The Visitor Experience

The project chooses to preserve the monument as a spectacular educational experience – rather than restoring it to its original form, and risk honouring the ideologies it was built to celebrate. This proposal will see many of the building's interior spaces frozen in their current, semi-ruined state. Through the use of modern technology however, visitors will be able to see Buzludzha in its original and also in its fully decayed condition.

The Buzludzha project will use **3D projection mapping** to bring the monument to life. Missing sections of mosaic can be projected onto the walls, while also allowing vast scope for educational light shows and seasonal exhibits.

The monument will take advantage of **augmented reality**, to create a truly unique visitor experience. Audio guides will be accompanied by specially developed headsets, allowing visitors to experience immersive and unforgettable self-guided tours.



COST ESTIMATIONS

Urgent intervention						
demolition & safe conditions	concept	number	cost/month	quantity (months or unit)	total in Euro	
	workers	20	400	8	64.000	
	trucks	4	1500	6	36.000	
	cranes	3	3200	6	57.600	
	aux. machinery	1	5000	6	30.000	
	structure repairs	1	3500	4	14.000	including demolition
	roof protection	4000	12	1	48.000	non permanent
	concrete repairs	1	2000	4	8.000	leakage interventions
	windows & doors	13	2500	1	32.500	
	waste management	1	800	4	3.200	cleaning & new waste
	new materials	1	1200	3	3.600	
	exterior & tower	1	4000	2	8.000	reinforcement
	mosaic repairs	1	800	4	3.200	to avoid degradation
	addition (works)				308.100	
	studies & design	1	35000	1	35.000	technical studies
	safety	1	5%	6	92.430	
	tech. contingencies	1	15%	1	60.080	
	total				495.610	
	taxes		???			not included

Main works						
Monument	concept	number	cost/month	quantity (months or unit)	total in Euro	
	workers	30	550	24	396.000	
	trucks	3	1500	24	108.000	
	cranes	4	3500	18	252.000	
	aux. machinery	1	5000	24	120.000	
	met. structure	1	10000	12	120.000	reinf. & new elements
	roof construction	4000	550	1	2.200.000	m2, including isolation
	concrete repairs	7000	70	1	490.000	m2, external protection
	mosaic protection	1	2500	8	20.000	
	waste management	1	1500	24	36.000	
	new materials	1	2000	24	48.000	
	exterior arrang.	1	7000	4	28.000	gardens, stairs, parkings
	access road	12	4500	1	54.000	repairs, pavement
	elevator	1	800000	1	800.000	
	tower & stars room	1	350000	1	350.000	including adaptation
	services	10	3000	2	60.000	toilets, technical rooms
	utilities	2	7000	3	42.000	water & electricity
	underground	1	6000	12	72.000	including foundations
	lighting	1	60000	1	60.000	
	heating	1	90000	1	90.000	
	decoration	1	20000	2	40.000	including new elements
	rendering	1	30000	2	60.000	paint, cleaning, etc
	addition				5.446.000	
	safety & quality	1	5%	1	272.300	
	tech. contingencies	1	10%	1	571.830	
	preparation & management	1	12%	1	653.520	including feasibility & technical studies
	total				6.943.650	
	taxes		???			not included

NATIONAL PARK MUSEUM SHIPKA-BUZLUDZHA

(source: National Tourism Portal of Bulgaria)

In October 1956, the former battlefield of Shipka and its surroundings were converted into an open natural park and in situ museum, forming the “National Park Shipka”. In March 1959 the area around the historical peak Hadzhi Dimitar was proclaimed as “National Park Buzludzha”. In 1964 both parks were united in the historical and architectural reservation “National Park Museum Shipka-Buzludzha”. The park operates until today under this name, however the Buzludzha monument is not and never was under its administration.

In fact, the park overwhelms two superposed purposes: historic memory and natural assets preservation. It covers the area of historic sites related to the defence of the Shipka pass during the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 and consists of a complex of monuments, reconstructions of battle positions, batteries and dug-outs.

The most significant monument in the park is the Monument of Liberty on the mount Shipka, opened in 1934. On its ground floor the bones of the defenders of Shipka are kept. In front of the sarcophagus stand still on an eternal vigil the stone figures of a Russian soldier and a Bulgarian volunteer. The exposition, located on the upper seven floors of the Monument, reveals the heroism of Russians and Bulgarians during the five-month defence of the pass. It includes a rich collection of decorations and medals, photographs and documents, personal belongings of the participants in the fighting and weapons. From the uppermost platform is unveiled a panoramic view of the countryside with the restored batteries, trenches, marked battle positions, monuments and common graves, which preserved the memory of the heroism and sacrifice of the Shipka heroes.

Annually between March and August thousands of Bulgarians gather there, to honour the memory of the fallen heroes and to celebrate the victory that gave birth to the freedom of Bulgaria.

Shipka Monument



NATURAL PARK BULGARKA

(source: National Tourism Portal of Bulgaria)

The “National Park Museum Shipka-Buzludzha” is partially located on the territory of the “Natural Park Bulgarka”, including the Monument of Liberty Shipka. The Buzludzha Monument is not within the borders of the park.

The natural park was founded in 2002 and is situated on the northern slopes and ridges of Shipchenska and Trevnenska Mountain, the Nature Park covers an area of 22 000 hectares. The main purpose is preservation, reestablishment and maintaining of natural beech, tree eco nets and the springs of the Yantra River in their upper part. 80 per cent of the park area is covered with forests, most of them being beech forests. Some rare habitats of conserving importance can be found, which are of extreme pan-European significance for Natura 2000 ecological nets.

According to the zoo-geographical zoning, the territory of the park falls into the zone of European fauna, the region of Balkan Mountain. Over 1800 species are established in the higher plant, out of which 32 are endemic. Forests and subalpine pastures are inhabited by a great number of invertebrates and vertebrates. Representatives of birds are golden eagle, lesser spotted eagle, woodcock, stock pigeon, black woodpecker, south white-backed woodpecker. The ancient bush forests are a safe refuge for the brown bear, the boar, the noble deer, the doe, the wolf, the martin and many others, including 9 species of bats that have also been identified. In addition, the area is an important habitat for a lot of feathered species.

In order to make visits safe and pleasant the Directorate of the park makes up tourist, educational and cognitive routes service infrastructure, specialized lectures, discussions and lessons, mountain excursions following special routes, eco-adventure games, additional lessons in the green schools, service information, educational and advertising materials. Along the entire length of the park there runs a part of the International tourist route E3 “Kom - Emine”.

There are data, according to which the Park has been inhabited since the remote past. In the Kiliite Cave, pieces of pottery decorated with lace from the time of Thracians were found (nowadays, some archaeological prospecting are being carried out). Within the Park limits, the Shipka-Etara National Park Museum, Etara Architectural and Ethnographic Complex and the protected places Sokolski Monastery and Mahchenitsa-Yovovtsi are located. Finally, among many other small Monuments, the Sokolski Monastery is located in one of the most beautiful nooks of the Park. The chapel treasures the icons, drawn by Zahari Zograph and there is a beautiful fountain, masterpiece of Kolyo Ficheto, located in the yard of the monastery.



MISSION DETAILS

Participants and meetings

EN / EIB-Institute mission	Mario Aymerich, Technical Advisor to the EIB Institute Graham Bell, Member of Europa Nostra Board Dora Ivanova, Founder of “Buzludzha Project Foundation“ Laurent Lévi-Strauss, Member of Europa Nostra Board
Dates of Mission	26-28 September 2018 Including meetings, site visit and press conference
Press and media	Press note and invitation, issued on 20 th September 2018 Broad media coverage of the site visit Press conference at the Regional Administration Stara Zagora on 27 th September 2018 Press release, issued on 3 rd October 2018

Persons met

Architect	Georgi Stoilov, Author of the Buzludzha Monument
Ministry of Culture	Mr. Rumen Dimitrov, Deputy Minister of Culture Mrs. Katja Djumalieva, Director of the Directorate for Cultural heritage, Mr. Petar Miladinov, State expert Department International cooperation, European programs and regional activities Mrs. Silva Hacherian, Head of Unit Department International cooperation, European programs and regional activities Mrs. Mariyana Kordova, Director of Department International cooperation, European programs and regional activities
Regional Government	Mrs. Gergana Mikova, Governor of Stara Zagora Region
Central Government	Mr. Valeri Simeonov, Deputy Prime Minister until 21.11.2018 Mrs. Mariyana Nikolova, Head of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister until 21.11.2018 and Deputy Prime Minister as of 21.11.2018