

## MEDIA TOOL FOR DESTINATION MARKETING – THE CASE OF ALEXANDROUPOLIS



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## DESTINATION MARKETING (DEFINITION & SCOPE)

Definition: *The term destination marketing defines the set of activities undertaken to promote a destination nationally and internationally, the creation of a positive image in the target audiences, the branding of a destination and the achievement of an advantage over competitors.*

In simpler terms, the mission of destination marketing is to create a common vision for all those involved in the tourism process [hoteliers, businessmen (coffee shops - bars, restaurants, travel - tourist agencies etc) local government authorities, ordinary citizens] for the best possible promotion and perception of a destination in the minds of its wannabe visitors.

It is needless to say that destination marketing treats a geographical area as a potential touristic business. There is no exaggeration in the argument that a successful destination marketing strategy is the one that pushes a visitor from the dreaming phase to the consideration phase of the travel cycle...

All in all, the goal of destination marketing is the development and progress of a destination and the improvement of its infrastructures and of the standard of living of its inhabitants, which can be summarized as sustainable tourism development...





### *WHAT MAKES A DESTINATION WORTH VISITING?*

1. Sightseeings
2. Amenities
3. Accessibility
4. Available tourist packages
5. Activities
6. Auxiliary services

Destination Brand → The first image or impression that comes in someone's mind when he/she hears the name of a certain destination (ie Barcelona – Gaudi, Athens – Parthenon, Rome – Colosseum, Paris – Eiffel Tower, Bordeaux – Wine, Milan – Fashion Week etc)

Destination marketing today needs to continually reinvent the “touristic id” of each destination due to the huge competition and the constant changes and trends in the market and the environment...



### *MINI BIO OF THE REGION OF EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE*

- It's the fourth biggest Region of Greece (14.157 km<sup>2</sup>)

The Region of Eastern Macedonia & Thrace consists of 5  
Regional Units:

- 1.Regional Unit of Evros (Alexandroupolis)
- 2.Regional Unit of Rodopi (Komotini)
- 3.Regional Unit of Xanthi (Xanthi)
- 4.Regional Unit of Kavala (Kavala)
- 5.Regional Unit of Drama (Drama)

The islands in the Region of Eastern Macedonia & Thrace:

- Samothraki (Regional Unit of Evros )
- Thassos (Regional Unit of Kavala)

The population of the Region is 598.613 (sixth place among  
others - January 2021) with Alexandroupolis being the  
crowdest city (57.812)





### THE REGION'S CONTRIBUTION TO GREECE'S TOURISM GDP

#### SOME INTERESTING DATA

- In 2018, tourism offered 21.6 billion € to the country's GDP / Of these, only 2% corresponded to the Region of Eastern Macedonia & Thrace ...
- Respectively in 2019, the Region records among all the other regions the following 3 negative records:
  - The lowest cost per visit with just 115 € showing a reduction of -31.1%
  - The lowest cost per night with 43 € showing a decrease of -13.1%.
  - The minimum length of stay per visit, ie 2.7 nights, recording a decrease of -20.8%
- On the other hand, it recorded an impressive increase (by + 98.6%) in terms of visits, recording 3,833 thousand, rising to the fifth place in 2019, with the majority of the visits coming from Bulgaria (2,197 thousand), Turkey (523 thousand) and Romania (310 thousand)
- In general, we are talking about a "virgin" region (with the bright exception of Thassos island) in terms of welcoming visitors but with measurable development and touristic prospects if its comparative advantages are utilized...
- Summing up, the poorest region nationwide - and in the whole Europe - is looking for its pace, aiming to increase its performance in the nation's touristic map...
- NOTE: According to the first estimates, the summer of 2021 for the Region, and especially the island of Samothrace, has proven even better than in 2019, when the previous best performance until then was recorded...

Περιφέρεια	% κατανομή εσόδων εισερχόμενου τουρισμού 2019	αναλογία άμεσης τουριστικής δαπάνης 2019 - σε € εκ.	ΑΕΠ Περιφερειών 2019* - σε εκ.	% ΑΕΠ στο οποίο αντιστοιχεί η τουριστική δαπάνη	κατά κεφαλήν ΑΕΠ 2017 - σε €
Ν. Αιγαίο	29,3%	6.861	6.391	107,4%	18.091
Κρήτη	20,4%	4.775	9.460	50,5%	14.366
Αττική	14,7%	3.437	89.228	3,9%	22.784
Κεντ. Μακεδονία	12,7%	2.983	25.732	11,6%	13.172
Ιόνια Νησιά	10,8%	2.534	3.297	76,9%	15.464
Αν. Μακεδονία & Θράκη	2,5%	583	7.225	8,1%	11.539
Πελοπόννησος	2,4%	553	8.359	6,6%	13.903
Θεσσαλία	2,0%	471	9.723	4,8%	12.911
Ήπειρος	1,5%	347	4.137	8,4%	11.879
Δυτ. Ελλάδα	1,5%	341	8.408	4,1%	12.216
Στερεά Ελλάδα	1,0%	239	8.794	2,7%	15.214
Β. Αιγαίο	0,9%	219	2.579	8,5%	11.955
Δυτ. Μακεδονία	0,4%	100	4.124	2,4%	14.663
<b>Σύνολο Χώρας</b>	<b>100,0%</b>	<b>23.442</b>	<b>187.456</b>	<b>12,5%</b>	<b>16.757</b>

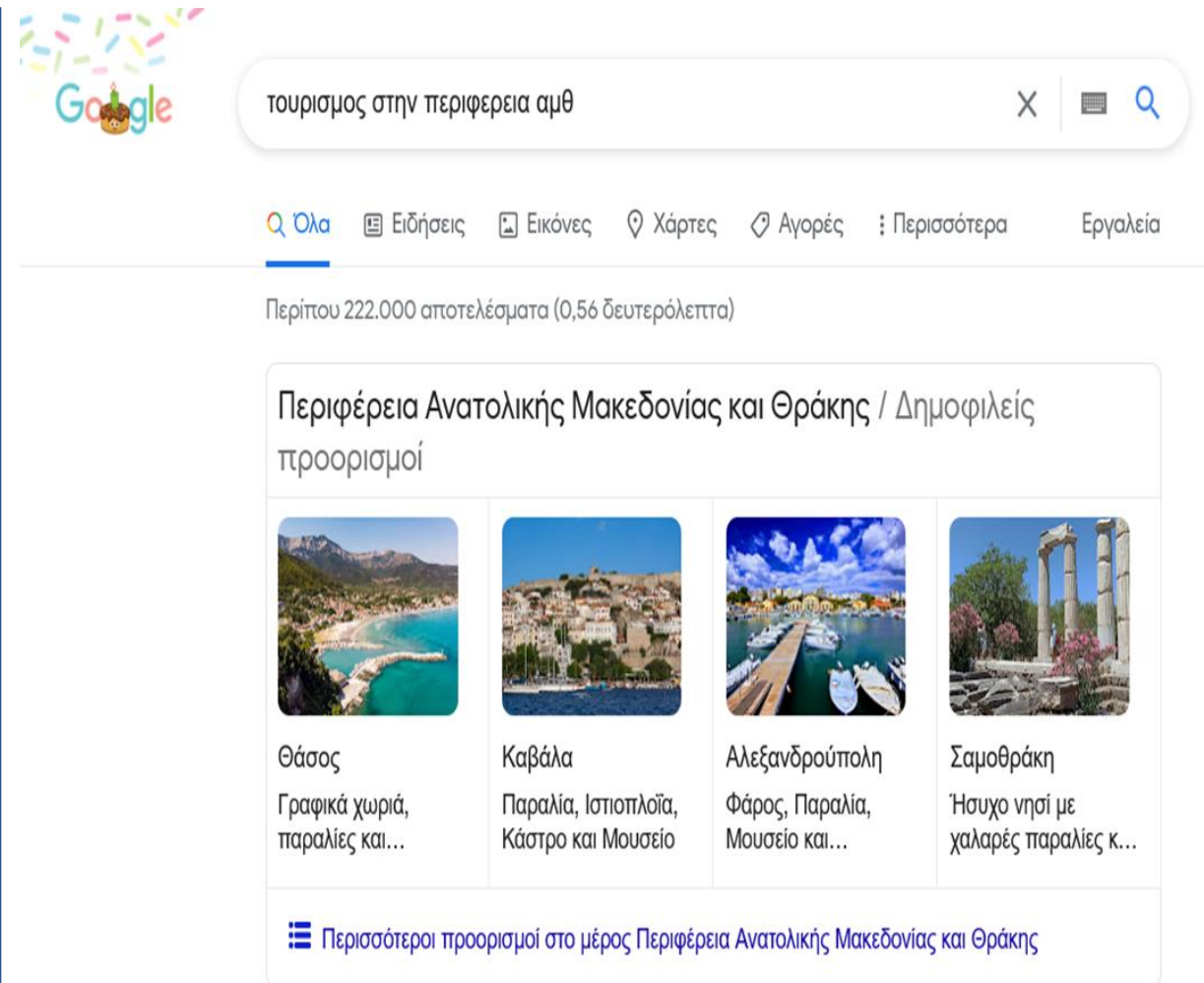
Πηγή: ΕΛΣΤΑΤ, ΤτΕ – Επεξεργασία INSETI Intelligence

Πίνακας 3. Επισκέψεις 2019-2016									
Θέση Κατάταξης 2019	Μεταβολή Θέσης Κατάταξης 2019-2018	Περιφέρειες	Επισκέψεις (σε χιλ.)				% Διαφορά		
			2019	2018	2017	2016	2019-2018	2018-2017	2017-2016
1	▲	Νότιο Αιγαίο	6.893	6.629	5.841	5.227	4,0%	13,5%	11,8%
2	▼	Κεντρική Μακεδονία	6.761	7.830	7.262	6.395	-13,7%	7,8%	13,6%
3	■	Αττική	5.923	5.681	5.137	4.543	4,3%	10,6%	13,1%
4	■	Κρήτη	5.288	5.228	4.806	4.537	1,1%	8,8%	5,9%
5	▲	Ανατολική Μακεδονία-Θράκη	3.833	1.930	1.349	1.363	98,6%	43,0%	-1,0%
6	▼	Ιόνια Νησιά	3.048	3.162	2.966	2.457	-3,6%	6,6%	20,7%
7	▲	Ήπειρος	1.033	823	713	717	25,5%	15,4%	-0,4%
8	▼	Πελοπόννησος	899	886	727	843	1,4%	21,9%	-13,8%
9	■	Δυτική Ελλάδα	817	699	563	513	16,8%	24,1%	9,8%
10	■	Θεσσαλία	806	675	694	714	19,5%	-2,7%	-2,9%
11	■	Στερεά Ελλάδα	679	549	376	409	23,6%	46,1%	-8,0%
12	■	Βόρειο Αιγαίο	359	389	364	328	-7,6%	6,7%	11,0%
13	■	Δυτική Μακεδονία	304	349	222	330	-12,8%	57,5%	-32,9%
<b>Σύνολο</b>			<b>36.643</b>	<b>34.831</b>	<b>31.021</b>	<b>28.376</b>	<b>5,2%</b>	<b>12,3%</b>	<b>9,3%</b>

Πηγή: Τράπεζα της Ελλάδας - Επεξεργασία: INSETI Intelligence

FAMOUS DESTINATIONS IN THE REGION (USING GOOGLE SEARCH) AND THEIR KEYWORDS

1. *Thassos (picturesque villages, beaches and hiking trails)*
2. *Kavala (beach, sailing, castle and museum)*
3. *Alexandroupolis (lighthouse, beach, museum and camping)*
4. *Samothrace (quiet island with relaxing beaches and ruins)*





### THE RADICAL CHANGE OF TOURISM – THE POSSIBLE HIDDEN ADVANTAGE OF THE REGION OF EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE

In general, tourism today is changing from mass to more and more personalized, customized and experiential, as the main product offered by it are unforgettable experiences and unique moments (*"People will forget what you said, will forget what you did, but will never forget how you made them feel"*). Especially when we talk about the dynamic audience of millennials, they are primarily eager for experiences and not acquiring material goods.

There is also a shift to alternative forms of tourism and the tendency of interaction between tourists and each destination (getting to know the local culture and people – ***from tourist to visitor to local***).

Here lies the dynamic of the Region, as not being a popular destination for mass tourism, it can with the appropriate promotion and marketing strategies offer what can be characterized as the prevailing trends in modern tourism, such as the offer of experiences, alternative activities and, the always sought by travellers, hospitality (eg *wine tasting in Drama, floating tour in the Delta of Evros, bird watching in the Forest of Dadia, canoe kayaking in Nestos, tasting in the olive groves of Makri* etc)



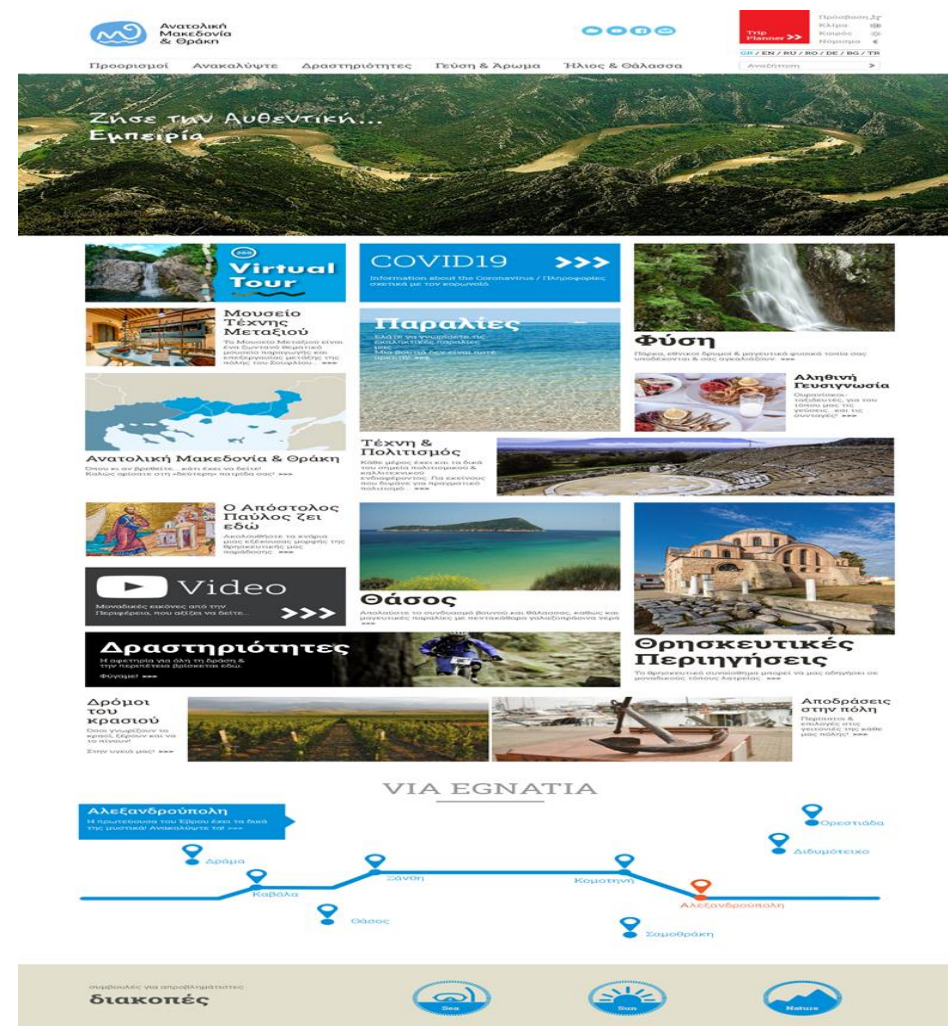
## DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATIONS IN THE REGION: STILL IN THEIR INFANCY...

In the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, and especially in Alexandroupolis, destination marketing is still in its infancy, with some initiatives being taken by the local authorities (Municipality, Prefecture, Chamber, Hoteliers Association etc.) individually and certainly not unified and under the same goals...

Modern and user-friendly websites have been created and are kept updated, delegations are participating in the significant and famous tourism exhibitions in Greece and internationally, leaflets are being given in the entry gates, advertised articles are published in the traditional media and the internet, travel bloggers and tv shows have visited often the area but there is still plenty to be done in terms of infrastructures and social media campaigns...

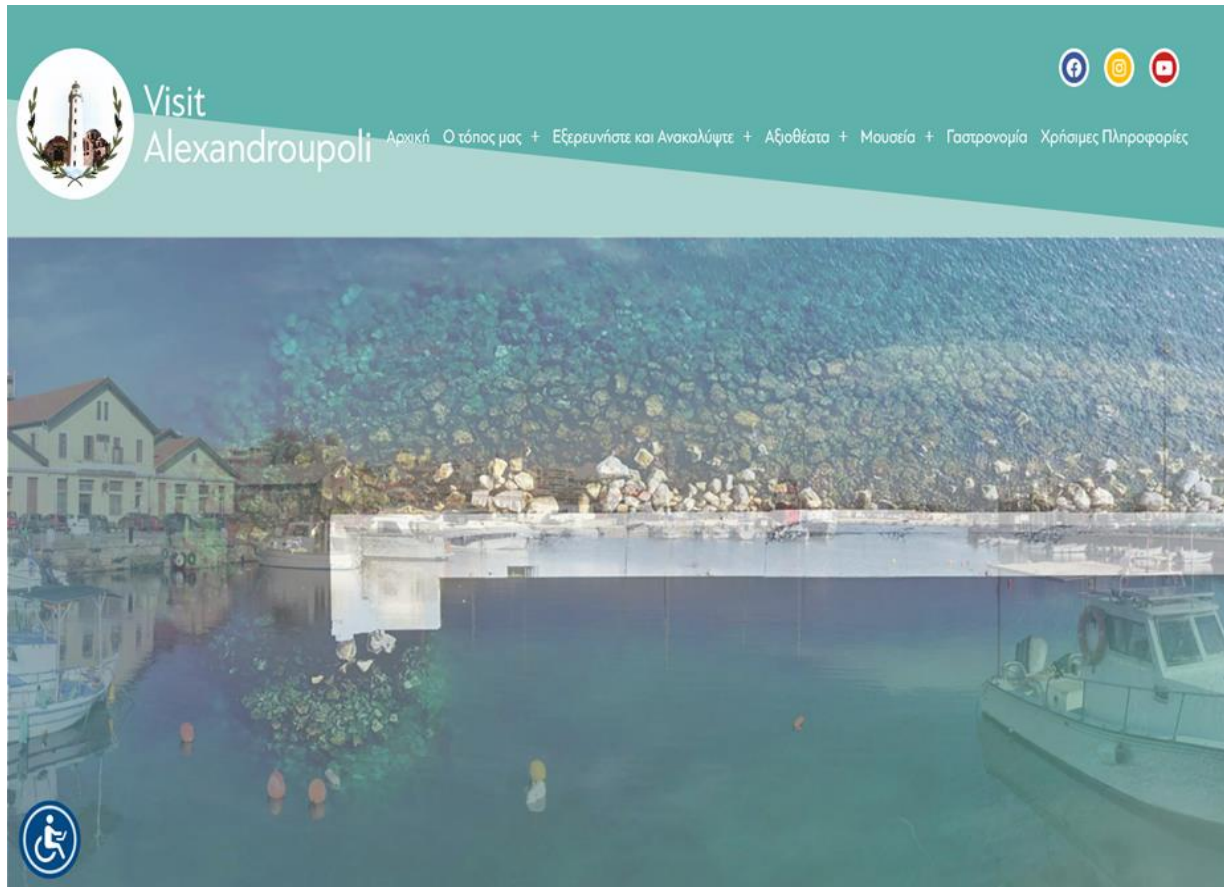
The Region, and especially Alexandroupolis, has tremendous potential as long as the infrastructures are improved (ie better utilization of the transport networks, renovating the repulsive image of the majority of the entry gates, further investing and promoting the natural and alternative activities etc) and new ones are added (ie building new hotels, completing the announced developmental projects etc)

But the most cheap and most productive measure to be taken is to invest in a constant, inspiring, innovative and permanent social media presence – Holidays nowadays are being planned almost entirely through our smartphones...





### ALEXANDROUPOLIS: A CITY IN SEARCH OF ITS PLACE IN THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TOURIST MAP...



The aim target is the transformation from a city - passage to become a city – destination all year long, ideal for city-break tourism with emphasis on the creation of further infrastructures and through proper education of the tourism professionals



### ALEXANDROUPOLIS: THE CITY'S “ID” AND ITS ADVANTAGES

The capital of Evros is characterized by the strategic advantage of being connected by the 4 means of transport:

- By airplane
- By boat
- By train
- By road

Alexandroupolis has the largest number of tourist and non-tourist accommodation among all the cities in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (2,632 hotel beds and 454 beds in non-main tourist accommodation).

The city welcomes tourists from Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania primarily and from North Macedonia and Serbia secondarily.

In the previous years, Alexandroupolis was registered as one of the most ideal cities for conference tourism due to the appropriate that time infrastructures in this direction. In recent years there has been a tendency to change the tourist narrative of the city and to be promoted as an ideal destination for family vacations, as well as nature-oriented, alternative, cycling and religious among others types of vacations.





### ALEXANDROUPOLIS IS TRYING TO EMERGE AS A TOURIST DESTINATION...

The 10 most famous sightseeing spots in the city (by Tripadvisor)

1. Lighthouse
2. Dadia Forest
3. Agia Paraskevi Beach
4. Ethnological Museum of Thrace
5. Information Centre of Delta Evros
6. Historical Museum
7. Saint Joseph Catholic Church
8. Kokkina Vrachia Beach
9. Metropolis Square
10. Educational Academy Zarifios

#### KEYWORDS

- Bike friendly destination
  - Family vacations
  - Gastronomy
- Thermal springs (reopening and further improving the actual facilities)
  - Delta Evros (working hours of the information centre)
    - Dadia Forest
    - Port
  - Infrastructures
- Museums (a large variety for a city in North Greece)



**Visit AXD**

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Εκπαιδευτικός Τουρισμός | Οι μαθητές όλων των προγραμμάτων εκπαίδευσης, πανεπιστημίων, σχολείων και κολλεγίων, από την Ελλάδα και το Εξωτερικό, έχουν την δυνατότητα να συνδυάσουν τις εκπαιδευτικές τους δραστηριότητες, την επαφή με τη φύση και την φιλοξενία μιας όμορφης παραθαλάσσιας πόλης με πολυτελή ξενοδοχεία και πλούσιες ψυχαγωγικές δραστηριότητες. 👉 <https://bit.ly/3ExTqJx>

Welcome to Alexandroupolis... All you wish is here!

 <https://alexpolis.gr/visitalexpolis/>

 Google Map: <https://bit.ly/3lsTjI8>

#welcome #welcomeAXD #alexandroupolis  
#alexandroupoli #ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥΠΟΛΗ #evros  
#thraki #sea #sun #AXD\_all\_Seasons  
#thraciansea #4seasonsdestination #visitAXD

### Alexandroupolis: The must-visit places (by Google)

1. Ethnological Museum of Thrace
2. Lighthouse
3. Historical Museum
4. EOT Beach
5. Yuppil Luna Park
6. Archaeological Museum
7. Casino
8. Coastal Avenue
9. Natural History Museum
10. Nea Chili Beach
11. Ecclesiastical Museum
12. Anatasis Delta Sculpture

**Instagrammability:**  
Most important factor  
for millennials on  
choosing holiday  
destination – On the  
right we can see a  
spot where Instagram  
moments can be  
made...



Google

Ταξίδια

Εξερεύνηση

Δραστήριες

Πτήσεις

Ξενοδοχεία

Ενοικιαζόμενα  
καταλύματα



Εθνολογικό Μουσείο  
Θράκης

4,7 ★★★★★ (377)

Αντικείμενα και πολιτιστική  
ιστορία της Θράκης



Φάρος  
Αλεξανδρούπολης

4,7 ★★★★★ (2.341)

Φάρος χτισμένος το 1880 με  
σιντριβάνι



Ιστορικό Μουσείο  
Αλεξανδρούπολης

4,6 ★★★★★ (89)

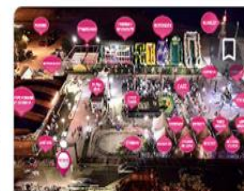
Μουσείο και Ιστορία



Παραλία του ΕΟΤ  
Αλεξανδρούπολης

4,2 ★★★★★ (255)

Παραλία



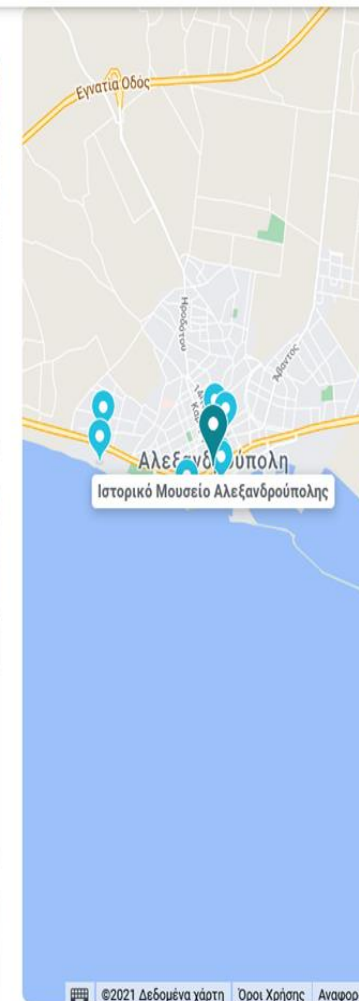
Yuppil Luna Park

4,2 ★★★★★ (596)



Αρχαιολογικό  
Μουσείο

4,5 ★★★★★ (53)





# CONCLUSIONS – WHAT IT HAS TO BE DONE?

- You can't talk about destination marketing nowadays without having a thorough and innovative social media presence – Investing in appropriate social media campaigns is a one way street...
- All the key players involved must cooperate and jointly create a narrative and a perception about what a potential tourist would gain by visiting Alexandroupolis (It's time to establish a Destination Marketing Organization for the area) – Some steps towards the right direction have been made because everybody has understood the importance of acting rather than wishing...
- Follow and adopt global touristic trends and produce a high quality and with unique aesthetic content for traditional and social media
- To improve the given services and the whole offered touristic experience, the opinions of the target groups must be taken into consideration – The social media act in that case like the silent – but ought to be heard – voices of the customers...
- In order to increase the visitor flows the destination should focus on the creation of a competitive thematic touristic product (infrastructures, services, unique experiences)



**THANK YOU**

**Any Questions?**