Workshop 2: Social participation in the regionalization and Europeanization of cultural heritage

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INTRODUCTION

The **Baltic Sea Region is one of most diverse areas of Europe** and yet for tourism it is still largely undiscovered. With its scenic nature, fascinating heritages and most of all the sea, which naturally links the places on shore, the Baltic Region has it all. The significance of the Region's history with the conquests of the Vikings, the fellowship of Hansa, or the legacy of king Olaf - is fundamental for understanding the world's history and its current shape.

While tourism of the Baltic Region may be seen as threatened by seasonal rhythm of travellers flow with long and dark winters, the heart winning concept of *hygge*, the cosiness, is one of many innovative and at the same traditional ways of sharing (and marketing) the sense of the place, not mentioning the famous quality of life and the high rates of happiness.

The **peripheral location** of the Region, if related to the Mediterranean attractions, may also be seen as an asset: the Region is well-commuted and has somehow managed to capture the uniqueness and authenticity of its many sites. This is largely due to the people, whose efforts to maintain their unique identities results in the Baltic way of life.

The Baltic Sea Region, however, needs to be managed through the effective use of **good strategies**, where cooperation between partners is the very important factor. The Council of Europe program of the Cultural Routes facilitates transnational exchanges, highlighting both the diversity, as well as what many Europeans share. In this respect, the Cultural Routes provide a fertile ground for implementing the European values, which are too often seen as too abstract to be considered relevant for everyday life.

While tourism in general presents numerous opportunities allowing developing the Region (so evidently connected by the Sea), the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe provide effective ways of bridging the gap between, often preached but not put in practice values, and citizens, at the same time valorising the unique existing resources. The **growing phenomenon of "route tourism"** may be therefore seen as enhancing the growth of diverse collective identities, as well as personal travellers'

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experiences and Routes4U provide the framework to rediscover these correspondences, otherwise shadowed by – among others - heritage commodification. A key challenge in this respect stands in capturing and developing the unique human dimension of route tourism, promoting the access to the heritage of the past and of today, discovering and rediscovering its evolving meaning and getting to know the local and regional communities.

Creating transnational regional networks of Cultural Routes requires however not only setting institutional frameworks which allow cooperation, but also including local communities and individuals in the processes of heritage interpretation. Participation is essential in view of authentic storytelling about the past, for building oneself-knowledge and enhancing the sense of belonging of the local community, and – last but not least- it can also be an important factor for local economic development.

As one of the aims of the Cultural Routes is „**promoting various European heritages and identities"**, both the social and human factors cannot be omitted, as they present the biggest significance and potential when it comes to heritages and identities. What is also interesting, moving from a social-science perspective, are the symbolic resources offered through the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, which make it possible for Europeans to "imagine" themselves as a group, in other words, allow for collective self-definition, which is an essential part of community-building.

Linking the Baltic Sea Region main heritage themes to European values, while narrating visited spaces makes the experience of travelling unique (and even transformative), yet what makes it really significant is **civil participation** and the potential for **social inclusion**. Too often they both remain merely declarations and indeed present numerous challenges if they are to be applied. The fact that managing route tourism includes a lot of people's personal involvement, while heritage interpretation is a lot about including unheard and marginalized narratives, makes cooperation within the project a good opportunity for social participation and for exercising European citizenship.

Understanding the dynamics of heritage Europeanization and regionalisation seems to make the task of social inclusion more feasible, as much as examining the relations of interests, needs and expectations among the partners involved in cultural routes' management. In this respect, the workshop will provide the chance to explore a theoretical framework which explains the Europeanization of heritage and social inclusion, with the aim to discuss it both as a concept, as well as in practical terms, illustrated with specific cases, especially with regard to the narrative resources of the Cultural Routes' tourism.

Furthermore heritage commodification will be examined in the context of social cohesion and regional development, with reference to the Baltic Sea Region framework.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

The main goal of the workshop is to **discuss with the participants about the concept of social inclusion, in heritage protection and promotion in the Baltic Sea Region, regarded as an aspect of heritage Europeanization.** Various ways of implementing social inclusion in cultural tourism will be identified in order to get a broad spectrum of possible activities which could strengthen local communities and enhance visitor experiences at the same time promoting European and regional identities. The participants, each with his/her own different background, experience and expertise will be asked to engage actively in the discussions, bringing his/her own contribution and to contribute in this respect to a fruitful peer-to-peer learning.

In order to see the clear context of potential cooperation of partners, a triangle model of actors will be proposed, where guests, hosts and European (and macro-regional) institutions will be presented. Before the participants will be taking roles of guests and hosts so that their needs, resources and expectation shall be expressed, the moderator will examine seven aspects of Europeanization of heritage which are of key relevance.

A short analysis with cases to illustrate the seven key values will cover the following **concepts: progress, utility, dignity, diversity, inclusion, narrativity and governance** (PUDDING is the acronym). In this context inclusion will be highlighted in relation to the core European values. The framework is a result of academic research combined with experience of working in heritage management and it has proved to be an effective working tool both for researchers and heritage activists.

The second part of the workshop will be devoted to **narrativity and storytelling** which both play a key role when it comes to route tourism. The concept of „community of the story" - one that unites hosts, guests and institutions - will be proposed and related to the triangle model of interests, mentioned above.

Specific ways of implementing inclusion of diverse social actors will be discussed in the final part of the workshop and recommendations will be formulated.

Social inclusion and civil participation with regards to the processes of Europeanization and regionalization will be assessed in view of some of the key priorities of the Baltic Sea Region, including "Connect the region" and "increase prosperity".

KEY QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

1**.** How can **heritage Europeanization and regionalization** be understood? How can these concepts be useful when it comes to **promoting cultural heritage in the Baltic Sea Region?**

- How can the goal of increasing prosperity be accomplished with regard to social participation of citizens in heritage related activism?
- How can better connections within the Region be achieved considering the potential of the Baltic Sea?

What is **visitor's experience** and how does it get narrated when related to external and personal reference frameworks?

How can **social inclusion** (w.r.t hosts, guests, „Europe" and macro-regional institutions) be **enhanced through the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe?**

What are the **needs, resources and expectations** of all the groups? How can they cooperate in order **to maximize social inclusion?**

What is the potential of **„community of the story"** and how can stories make frameworks for specific actions within the context of Routes4U implementation in the Baltic Sea Region?

In what ways can **storytelling/narrativity provide frameworks for social inclusion in route tourism in the Baltic Sea Region?** What are concrete examples of social inclusion based on "community of the story", along the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in the Baltic Sea Region?

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