

First Routes4U meeting for the Alpine Region (EUSALP)

“Strengthening regional development through the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe”

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Fort of Bard

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WORKSHOP 3 | Marketing strategies for the promotion and visibility of the Alpine Region cultural heritage

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INTRODUCTION

Europe’s rich cultural heritage can be further explored, bringing thorough opportunities for economic and social cohesion, and EU external relations. These are core elements in the New European Agenda for Culture. Routes4U Project fosters regional development through the Cultural Routes. EUSALP includes **23 Cultural Routes** crossing 7 countries that have in common strengths and weaknesses. The Dolomites can witness this double faceted reality. In 2009 UNESCO listed the Dolomites as a World Heritage Site. The prestige gained by world-heritage listed properties acts as a catalyst for strengthening **the sense of responsibility** of the populations towards the sites they have in their custody. Thus they are required to have a management strategy setting out precise conservation measures and control mechanisms. The alpine region is where we can listen our spirituality; and also where testing a more and more sustainable development, from the social, economic and environmental perspectives.

The **Alps are the water tower of Europe** and are known all over the world for their natural beauty, varied landscapes, rich biodiversity and cultural heritage. The Alpine region is a unique territory, which has an important potential for dynamism, but **is facing major challenges**, such as: economic globalisation and competitiveness, demographic trends, climate change, energy challenge, being a transit region and reducing the impact on local communities.

Regional development is a complex, multi-dimensional concept dealing with various factors, such as: endowment of cultural resources, influence of sectors on regional development, dynamics of new business models' development, infrastructure investment and accessibility, employment, quality of human resources, education, etc.

The Alpine area is a very important natural ecosystem because the Alps offer to us the opportunity to study how climate is changed through the time and, by the way, helping us facing what’s coming next. It’s one of the most precious and fragile place in the world, because in the next year it will be the 1st area in the world suffering the worst effects of climate change, together with the artic one.

80 million people live and work in the Region. According to ESIF data, the total expenditure for R&D in EUSALP regions is 67 billion €; the percentage of R&D spending on GDP is very variable from region to region: from 0.4% (Italy – Valle d’Aosta) to 4.87% (Austria - Steiermark).

New macro-regional business model and cultural tourism on cultural routes asks for sophisticated smart specialization approach, taking into account market trends, visitors and values they are searching for. EUSALP cultural routes have great importance for territorial

(regional) cohesion and diversified tourism offer; it is important to acknowledge wider tourism context within which cultural routes operate, expand and develop in accordance with macro-regional cultural characteristics.

Creative industries can provide resources for stimulating and inspiring interpretation and presentation of hidden heritage i.e. through VR (virtual reality) as trigger and AR (augmented reality) for better understanding of destinations on the spot, creating macro-regional virtual brochures etc. for the common digital platform.

Cross-border cooperation and common goals effectively implemented are needed to tackle those challenges.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

Here follows the main objectives accordingly to the relevance of this workshop, regarding the Marketing strategies for the promotion and visibility of the Alpine Region cultural heritage:

1. Promote holistic sustainability - detect challenges regarding the development of new business models, management of cultural routes in EUSALP countries, connectivity, presentation and interpretation of cultural heritage, and harmoniously integrated infrastructure for visitors:

- Cultural routes providing not only new experiences for visitors but understanding and transformation – awareness raising and responsible consumption;
- Transition: from naturalistic to cultural tourism and from industrial tourism to a more sustainable one.

2. Foster regional development through extension of existing cultural routes and development of new ones stimulating reduction of inequality

3. Diversify tourism offer: acknowledge culture and heritage as drivers for sustainable growth, especially for extension of the routes, and creation of new ones (holy bodies...)

4. Detect needs for further education and joint development of projects (summer schools for youth; education in management & marketing, doctoral exchange programmes)

Provide recommendations for enhanced profiling of the macro region and its cultural routes and their competitiveness. In particular, pay attention to digital inclusion as a key factor both for citizens and SMEs in order to compete within european market and support the wider internationalization of tourism offer.

5. Compare the evaluations of smart specialization strategies and learn from best practices in order to scale or replicate the same models, starting from the different local contexts, within other areas.

KEY QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

1. Research: how can existing best practices and research models be used for:

- a. macro-regional co-operation in knowledge exchange and R&D for new Alpine Region markets;
- b. new macro-regional thematic areas for routes.

2. An holistic approach to sustainability

How is tourism infrastructure integrated within cultural routes sustainable development framework and what are the proposals for improvement along the EUSALP?

We need to promote the shift of professional towards a sustainable oriented direction in every economic sector. Can we introduce incentives for attending masters courses for sustainability leaders?

How can macro regional development of cultural routes foster a more and more sustainable development through the reduction of poverty and inequality, the introduction of new green business models, new employment possibilities and economic growth?

3. Can routes provide synergies and foster coordinated actions through tourism, connecting networks of small but sustainable destinations, creative cities and rural areas, working on citizens empowerment and resilience? Are current existing management models of the routes including good management practices and tools and what are proposals for improvement?

4. Trans-border macro-regional development of cultural routes: what extensions can be made to existing cultural routes and what are potentials for developing new routes?

5. Big data analysis to detect engagement and happiness of locals and “elsewhere citizens”:

a. Why Big Data phenomenon is relevant for Culture and Tourism? How tools related to Big Data could help cultural and creative private companies and/or public institutions in fostering cultural, social and economic development?

b. Evidence based suggestions to diversify macro-regional tourism offer development

6. Activities strengthening regional innovation and SME’s:

What are most successful activities provided by the routes, combining cultural heritage / cultural and creative industries for visitors’ needs, and what are proposals for improvement?

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