

European regions for sustainable tourism

PRESERVE INTRODUCES ITSELF

Regional and local authorities make their way towards sustainable tourism

Welcome to Preserve: 14 partners from 11 European countries eager to make their tourism strategies more sustainable and to set new standards for regional actors. This is the added value of this EU-cooperation will be communicated to the various stakeholders in partner meetings, press conferences, and networking activities. The idea of publishing a periodical newsletter destined to the European regions and other stakeholders in the field of sustainable tourism came into being for this purpose.

This is number 0. And in this sense the basic contents of Preserve are presented: the description of the project, its objectives, partners and the expected results. The activities make up a course of action that will unravel itself over three years, until 2011.

Preserve places a lot of attention on the dissemination of the results, also for another objective, that is to include the regions that are partners in Preserve and new territories in a project aimed at defining a course of action for eco-sustainable regions in Europe, thus also contributing to the knowledge of the lesser known zones. As a pre-condition to participation in this course of action, the regions will be asked to apply the tools developed through Preserve, thus ensuring that the project has the possibility of having real effects, a chain, that the regional best practices are sufficiently disseminated, sustaining the diversity of Europe through sustainable development.

THE CENTRAL ELEMENTS OF THE INTERREGIONAL EUROPEAN IV C PROJECT

The effectiveness of the sustainable development plan grows with

PRESERVE

This INTERREG IV C project brings together 14 partners coming together from 11 different territories; the consortium intends to increase the effectiveness of the regional development policies starting with cultural heritage and the countryside as central factors of the development.

They represent old and new member states which have a vast geographical frame of reference.

The heart of Preserves unrolls as a logical progression of exchanges starting from the demands of regional development.

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

The Lead Partner is the Assembly of European Regions. Other partners include: Abruzzo (Italy); Alba County Council (Romania); Alytus County Governor's Administration (Lithuania); Avila County Council (Spain); the Office of Banska Bystrica Self-governing Region (Slovakia), Cerchiara di Calabria town council (Italy), the Office of the Carinthian Government, Department 20 – Spatial Development (Austria); Eszak-Alfold Regional Development Agency (Hungary); Syddansk Turism (Denmark); Orebro Regional Development Council (Sweden); Region of Sterea Ellada (Greece); Internationalisationcenter Styria (Austria); Eurobic Toscana Sud (Italy).

Their goal: Based on the use of common methodologies, exchange of good practices and through the tool of Peer Reviews, the aim is to define individualised work plans with which the partners will take concrete actions to influence their policies. In short, partners will increase the sustainability of their tourism policies.

THE RESULTS THAT ARE EXPECTED OF THE EUROPEAN PROJECT. EVERY PARTNER WILL HAVE TO CONSTRUCT PLANS OF ACTION FOR THEIR OWN TERRITORY

Exchange of experiences, growth of knowledge, sharing of good practices.

This is the route which Preserve will take

The main aim of Preserve is to contribute to the sustainability of tourism policies made in regions. Exchanging good practices, holding seminars, conferences, workshops, communicating the results, using the tool of Peer Reviews, drafting recommendations followed by concrete action plans; these are the basic elements of the strategy.

The three important results expected of Preserve are: to promote the exchange of experiences and increase the knowledge of the local and regional stakeholders; to identify and share good practices; to expand the local and regional policies.

Thanks to various dissemination tools (conferences, the internet site, the newsletter) and through the exchange of good practices, the partners and stakeholders will reach strong awareness of the principles that govern sustainable tourism. That will provide the actors with additional information so to permit them to identify other good practices in order to stimulate further growth of the awareness of the policy.

METHODOLOGY PEER REVIEWS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM



Meetings, conferences, Peer Reviews: the course of action of Preserve

The project was set off with the conference in Brussels last 6 November 2008

Preserve was set off with a conference in Brussels last 6 November 2008. During the meeting all the partners introduced themselves and their expectations; the search for new and innovative approaches to sustainable tourism, learning from other regions, exchanging experiences, developing partnerships with other regions, sharing of problems and their solutions.

The launch conference was held in Brussels, on 5 February 2009 and gathered 48 stakeholders including regional

representatives, actors in the tourism sector and representatives from the EU institutions. At this sitting the logo and brochure of the project were presented.

On 1-3 April 2009 the partners met again in Graz (AT) to continue the course of the Interregional project. During the meeting various tasks were effectively undertaken to improve the peer review method, to identify the most appropriate indicators to evaluate the sustainability of regional tourism policies.



22-26/06/2009 Örebro welcomes Partners to the heart of Sweden for the first PEER REVIEW

Partners from Styria (AT), Abruzzo (IT), Alytus (LT) and Eszak-Alföld (HU) travelled to Örebro for a week long study visit. The peers carried out numerous interviews and site visits to evaluate the potential and opportunities for the region to develop its sustainable tourism activities and offers.

This was also the first opportunity for partners to test the commonly established peer review methodology and will thus ensure its applicability.



Upcoming Events

6 For the next few months, a calendar of important initiatives

- **19-23 October**
Group 2 (Tuscany, South Denmark, Carinthia) will meet in Banska Bystrica for the second Peer Review.
- **March 2010**
thematic conference in Alba, Romania.



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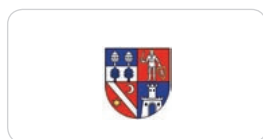
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PRESERVE PROJECT
Total Budget: 1.589.281.22€
ERDF funding: 1.222.160.23€
National co-financing: 367.120.99€

project start: November 2008
end: October 2011
Number of partners 14

Partners Description

LEAD PARTNER AER

The Assembly of European Regions (AER) is the largest independent network of regions in wider Europe. Bringing together more than 270 regions from 33 countries and 13 interregional organizations, AER is the political voice of its members and a forum for interregional co-operation.

AER has been active in the field of sustainable policies for many years now. The Committee 1

of the AER currently manages a working group on tourism and has recently launched a Web Portal on sustainable tourism. 20 AER member regions are already visible on this platform, which enables them to showcase their cultural heritage. The AER will contribute its experience of interregional collaboration and the extensive dissemination potential to this project. Since cultural heritage and landscape is a key topic

for many regions, the information from the PRESERVE project will be actively promoted and absorbed through the AER channels of information.



STYRIA (AT)

In Styria, all the attractions of Austria can be found in one province. Between the unspoilt nature of the Dachstein glacier and the enchanting scenery of the wine region, there is an abundance of lovely scenic spots and many impressive cultural treasures.

With its wide range of holiday offers Styria caters for all tastes, from pure relaxation holidays to challenging sports experiences and the province is an attractive destination throughout the year.

Styria enjoys a reputation of being the culinary

centre of Austria. Besides, the very reasonable prices, the rustic charm and the Mediterranean flair make the province an insider's tip for pleasure holidays. The PRESERVE project is important for the region since

it will first of all enable good practice transfer and mutual learning. Moreover, through the co-operation, new ways for economic growth in the tourism sector will be opened.



ÖREBRO (SWEDEN) The HEART OF SWEDEN

Here some specific about Örebro (S) by Gunn-Viol Kattilakoski, sales manager for the tourist information office: "We think we have a high tourism potential in our region. Already now, our region is well known when it comes to the national tourism. Among activities, gastronomic, cultures, history and shopping we also have a fantastic nature. This is what we want to develop for the

international market. From north to south extends a 270km long hiking trail. Along this trail we see a huge potential for forthcoming products for the tourism sector. Our goal is to develop and find a common quality mark for us and our working partners, also to be used by our contiguous counties. It will also be very interesting to be able to take share in other regions plans on sustainable tourism. What we do good, what we can improve?

– we have a sustainable tourism project for the city of Örebro, but not for the region. For example, we need to learn how best to educate our entrepreneurs to deal with international tourists– what information they need and how to give them this information via a website in English.

Q: What kind of sustainable tourism projects can your region offer to tourists?

G-V K: We have a very tranquil region with lots of nice things to do – we are really at the heart of Sweden and have highlands and lowlands, lake Hjälmaren, Sweden's fourth largest lake, and forests, plus we are only a couple of hours from Stockholm or even Oslo. We do have lots of tourists, but we need a stronger package and hope we will learn how to create it from the peer review.

Q: What have you learnt from the project?

G-V K: We have just started and so it is too soon to say, but we will be peer reviewed at the end of June. We hope this will give us the tools to work on our strategy

