
WORKGROUP ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

FINAL DOCUMENT

Split, 17th October 2018

I. Introduction

Workgroup on sustainable tourism of the AIC Forum, was held on the 17th of October 2018 in Split, as part of the 1st Joint Annual Conference of the Fora of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, Cities and Universities.

Coordinators of this year's Workgroup on sustainable tourism were the Ancona Chamber of Commerce and the Zadar University.

The Workgroup has been coordinated by an efficient and competent team, composed of:

- **Mr Flavio Burlizzi** Permanente Delegate of Unioncamere Europa, on behalf of the Ancona Chamber of Commerce;
- **Dr Cinzia De Marzo**, EU senior advisor of the AIC Forum & sustainable tourism expert, on behalf of the Ancona Chamber of Commerce;
- **Mrs Nataša Bušić**, senior expert advisor and Coordinator for Tourism and Agriculture, on behalf of the organiser of the conference, Croatian Chamber of Economy, County Chamber Split,

In addition, **professor Slaven Zjalić**, from the Zadar University, has been appointed as the contact person.

The Workgroup on Sustainable tourism is in line with the overall EUSAIR strategy and strives towards the implementation of the Action Plan, by encouraging exchanges and concrete actions at macro regional level, and inducing constructive debate.

The theme of this year's Workgroup has been "**Creative cultural tourism and sustainable EUSAIR destinations**", as part of AI NURECC initiative rolling plan

The session was divided into two panels:

1. Creative and cultural industries in the context of the EU Cultural Heritage Year and EU China tourism Year,
2. Sustainable tourism management at macro-regional level, in line with the UN 2030 17 SDGs.

In the framework of the **EU Strategy for Adriatic and Ionian Region** - EUSAIR, in particular of the Pillar IV 'Sustainable tourism topics (1) *Diversified tourism offer*

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(*product and services*) and (2) *Sustainable and responsible tourism management*, the WG for sustainable tourism discussion was aimed at providing additional inputs and ensuring better coordination of the initiatives linked to the priority action 1 (topic 1) '*Fostering Adriatic Ionian cultural heritage*' and priority action 2 (topic 2) '*Developing network of Sustainable Tourism businesses and clusters*', of **EUSAIR Action Plan**.

2.Strategic outlines

PANEL I

- Moderator: **Mrs Nataša Bušić.**, senior expert adviser & Coordinator for Tourism and Agriculture, County Chamber Split,

The contribution of the qualified speakers of **Panel 1**, which was focused on the theme ***Creative and cultural industries in the context of the EU Cultural Heritage Year and EU China tourism year***, has generated an added value in order to accommodate a platform of mutual interests for the benefit of each EUSAIR country, by sharing experiences and by taking into account the EU institutional perspective and cooperation policy, interdisciplinary, transnational and inter-sectoral points of view.

The Keynote speaker of the first panel, **Mr Manos Vougioukas**, secretary general of the European Cultural Tourism Network (ECTN), the only Pan-European network of destinations, authorities, NGOs and research institutes for sustainable Cultural Tourism development and promotion across Europe, introduced the Charter for Sustainable Cultural Tourism. The purpose of this Charter is to bring together in a single, comprehensive and integrated document the main principles, features, findings, conclusions and recommendations on best practices and priorities regarding Culture & Heritage Tourism. This Charter aims to build on all relevant previous initiatives, declarations, convention, resolutions, opinions and charters, to exploit synergies and facilitate implementation of recommendations by national, regional and local destination authorities and agencies.

The overall aim is to encourage sustainable and responsible tourism policies and actions across Europe and beyond, through engaging culture and heritage with innovation and cohesion.

Dr Diego Marani, Advisor on cultural policy at the European External Action Service (EEAS) presented the EU-Western Balkans Cultural Heritage Routes, a starting point to create networks of cultural heritage sites and of creative industries in this region and in other regions of the world. "*A cultural heritage site plays an important role not only in*

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the preservation of memory and cultural identity but also as an economic resource attracting tourist and providing the opportunity for the development of creative industries around the site with activities such as craftsmanship but also new technologies such as apps for the visit of the site, interactive guides and the development of knowledge in restoration techniques “, emphasized Diego Marani.

The panel continued stressing the importance of products and services of cultural heritage tourism with the aim of tackling seasonality of inland, coastal and maritime tourism demand. **Mr Flavio Burlizzi**, presented the European Network of “Hidden gems” UNESCO sites – Mirabilia, an initiative of 17 Italian Chambers of Commerce whose aim is to enhance the entrepreneurial environment of the whole cultural tourism value chain with an integrated approach. The network is enlarging in other EU countries such as France, preliminary exchanges with Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Spain while other contacts are planned with the Western Balkans as well through the cooperation with the AIC Forum. Croatian Chamber of Economy County Chamber Split has expressed interest in becoming part of the Network.

Continuing on the same page **Mr Massimiliano Polacco**, vice president of the Ancona Chamber of Commerce gave an introduction and **Ms Francesca Farinelli** presented the unique possibility of strengthening human resources in culture and creative tourism within the “Ecapital Culture Adriatic start-up school” project, which is a part of the AI NURECC initiative and in line with EUSAIR Sustainable tourism pillar. This project’s objective is to improve the quality and innovation of tourism offer and enhance the sustainable and responsible tourism capacities of the tourism actors across the macro-region.

For the third edition of the Ecapital Culture – Adriatic Start up school they are looking for partnership with public and private organisations in the AI countries in order to spread the information about the next call in January 2019, and engage as many candidates as possible from their respective territories. The school will start in May 2019. Mrs Farinelli explained that this is an opportunity for all to learn entrepreneurial management skills in cultural tourism and creative industries and that all expenses for accommodation and travel, will be covered for all participants.

Tomislav Klarin from University of Zadar pointed out the role of creative industry in sustainable tourism. On the example of City of Zadar, he showed how creative architecture may influence the change of tourism identity and branding on the tourism market. Prof. Klarin stressed the opportunity of such process in tourism development, however, he also warned on possible negative effects on the local community and their

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cultural identity, which could reduce the tourist attractiveness and quality of life of local community.

The last speaker of the 1st panel was **dr Flora Karagianni**, Head of the Promotion of Scientific Research at the European Centre for Byzantine and Postbyzantine Monuments. She presented the NAVIS project through which the historical ports of the Adriatic and Ionian region are to be connected with the aim of their promotion as the unique destinations of cultural tourism.

By presenting projects and initiatives this panel has called for cooperation:

- Within the Mirabilia network, where the CCE County Chamber Split has expressed interest and will attend the next meeting in Pavia, Italy on the 27th of October
- To all public and private organisations in the AI countries in order to spread the information about the next call of the Ecapital Culture – Start-up School in January 2019, where all that enlist have the opportunity to learn entrepreneurial management skills in cultural tourism and creative industries with all expenses in regards to accommodation and travel covered for the duration of the school.

We can conclude that the panel 1 has, in line with the AI NURECC initiative, addressed its guidelines through involving stakeholders of Chambers, Cities, Universities and other important institutions. The Workgroup has encompassed presentations which have brought together the culture and creative sectors and has promoted the EUSAIR within the EYCH 2018.

PANEL 2

Moderator: **Dr Cinzia De Marzo**, EU senior advisor of the AIC Forum & sustainable tourism expert,

With a similar approach, within the **Panel 2 'The Sustainable tourism management at macro-regional level, in line with the UN2030 17 SDG's'**, the WG for sustainable tourism aimed at gathering concrete examples and achievements linked to the EUSAIR Action Plan (Pillar IV - Topic 2) also compared with previous EU macro regional strategies like Danube region, fostering the implementation of monitoring tools (i.e. ETIS implementation at DMO level (Ljubljana), CROSTO International sustainable observatory in Croatia, etc) able to measure the impact that the already set projects and actions, in line with EUSAIR strategy have. The aim of the Workgroup was to promote the exchange of expertise, and to foster further cooperation between the countries of the Adriatic and

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Ionian region in regard to sustainable tourism, with focus on management, measurement and implementation of indicators and tools.

The keynote speaker of the Panel 2 was **Mr Gordon Sillence**, vice president of Ecotrans (European Network for sustainable tourism development) who said that “All regions are now part of an internationalized economy that offers both challenges and opportunities in the context of overall global to local sustainable development, encapsulated in the UN/EU 2030 Agenda for Change”, he stressed that the time for implementation is now and that the key is in international collaboration, while ICT will make it possible. He also invited to a mutual use of tools that are currently at disposal.

Ms Blanka Belošević from the Ministry of tourism, as the EUSAIR strategy Sustainable tourism pillar coordinator for Croatia, stated that the “Focus of the pillar are two themes; Diversified tourism offer and Sustainable and responsible tourism management” and stressed that “the greatest challenge in reaching these goals is financing”.

In line with the above mentioned, **Ms Barbara Toce**, vice president of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, continued listing European and national strategies of sustainable tourism and concluded that a better international cooperation is necessary for achieving greater improvements, regarding sustainable and responsible tourism.

Dr Hrvoje Carić from the Croatian Institute for Tourism introduced the participants with CROSTO (Croatian Sustainable Tourism Observatory), a long-term international research project of the Institute for tourism established in cooperation with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in order to monitor and measure tourism sustainability in Croatia. CROSTO is a member of International Network of Tourism Observatories (INSTO) which is being developed under auspices of the UNWTO.

Two primary tasks of CROSTO observatory are:

1. Measurement and monitoring of tourism sustainability at regional level;
2. Promotion of measurement and monitoring of tourism sustainability at local level.

As the primary tool for tourism sustainability measurement and monitoring, CROSTO applies European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS), developed by the European Commission.

Carić stated that “Tourism can feel the consequences of pollution, but it can also cause pollution. The point is very simple, the use of resources must be less than the possibility of their renewal. So in order to manage we need to measure.”

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In order to compare and connect with other regions, the following speakers presented their best practices:

- **Mr Danko Čosić**, Director of Programmes at the Danube Competence Centre showed a short film about the Danube region
- **Ms Alenka Soršak**, Senior expert advisor – DMO representative from Ljubljana, told us the story of Green Ljubljana
- Concern in regards to small rural towns was expressed by **Ms Nikolina Radmilo Pivčević**, director of the Cooltour travel agency from Omiš, Croatia, showing us the example of Gata, a small rural town in Split – Dalmatia County.

3. Main outcomes

From both panels, the following question marks and challenges have been raised and, to tackle those critical issues, some common actions need to be taken:

- In the field of cultural and sustainable tourism (including creative and cultural heritage), there is a great potential in the Adriatic and Ionian area which has to be exploited;
- There is a huge amount of existing projects (transnational, European) which can be capitalized if the key stakeholders will share better information and will foster exchanges;
- How to face the lack of qualified human resources and investments, in order to ensure better integration;
- There is a need to ensure coherence from management to marketing activities, with regards the promotion of tourist destinations (linked with cultural routes, UNESCO sites, natural areas, etc) across the AI countries;
- It is crucial to monitor the socio-cultural and environmental impact of the macro-regional dimension, related to sustainability issues.

4.Actions agreed

The Workgroup has identified a **basket of possible common existing and thematic projects**, already co-financed by the EU through the territorial cooperation programs, that are in line with EUSAIR Action Plan (the 2 priority actions for Pillar IV) and the AINURECC initiative, which also contribute to the development of an effective multi-actor and multi-level governance of EUSAIR.

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The key stakeholders agreed to improve better coordination and collaboration among the respected governments at the AIC macro-regional level, in order to generate a **critical mass** based on experience/replicable models already done by various stakeholders. This is imperative to avoid fragmentation and to facilitate the deliverable of concrete results.

Within this Workgroup, namely the representatives of the Regions, Cities, Chambers of Commerce and Universities of the Adriatic and Ionian area, have decided to pool their knowledge and expertise to set-up more structured and stronger cooperation among all public and private key stakeholders, aiming at promoting the exchange of expertise, capitalising on project ideas and enhancing business to business solutions in the upcoming months, with a long term perspective.