

Listen to News

Newsletter for partners of project
Listen to the Voice of Villages

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Editorial

■ Dear Partners,
You are holding in your hands the first issue of the **Listen to News** newsletter, which will be issued twice a year over the whole period of the Listen to the Voice of Villages project. We would like to inform you about the latest news in our shared project and also to give you the space to share your news and observations with others.

We hope that our Newsletter will be a useful communication tool which will help you to advertise the project at home and abroad.

We look forward to your contributions and wish you pleasant and thought-provoking reading.

Your editorial team

Project news

■ More than five months have passed since the project began and the first balance sheet of our successes and progress in the Listen to the Voice of Villages projects is around the corner.

First of all it is important to mention the new logo of the Vital Villages association, created by the Lead Partner, the Autonomous Province of Trento. The websites www.listentothevoiceofvillages.org and www.vitalvillages.info have also been registered and are beginning to take shape. These should soon be meeting their jobs to inform the public and participating project partners, so please don't forget to update all important

data and data of interest detailed here. In mid-May a communication seminar took place in Vienna, organised by the Central Europe Programme, dedicated to improving the communication knowledge of managers responsible for the promotion of projects supported by CEP. Representatives of the Lead Partner and Communication Partner took part in the seminar for the Listen to the Voice of Villages project. The Steering Committee also took place in Slovenia where, after a break of a number of months, all project partners met once again. Our next meeting will take place in the second half of the year in Forchheim, Franconian Switzerland.



Lead Partner

Autonomous Province of Trento Italy

■ The Autonomous Province of Trento strongly believes into the cooperation among the partners, and into the experimentation – implemented through the pilot project – as a way to built up innovative solutions for the sustainable development of the territories. The participations to the project is aimed to increase the competitiveness and the attractiveness of the rural marginal territories, holding unexpressed tourist potential, through the settlement and the implementation of new territorial governance tools (arranged by the University of Trento) and drawing up of new pilot projects inside sustainable tourism sector.

The Autonomous Province of Trento, as Lead Partner, coordinates the daily activities of the Listen to the Voice of Villages project. The LP takes over the responsibility for management, internal communication, implementation and co-ordination of activities among the involved partners, including the full administrative and financial responsibility. Moreover, the Autonomous Province of Trento arranges the reporting activities and the administrative duties with the Joint Technical Secretariat (Vienna) and the European Commission.



Project Partner 2

University of Trento Italy

■ eTourism Research Group is responsible for WP3 Research and Analysis; its tasks concern managing research activities on LP target territories, in Trentino, and coordinating all partners in this process, sharing with them methodology and analysis tools. The output of WP3 consists in a benchmark report, which will collect research data on all Vital Village Association territories, and propose a governance model for rural and sustainable tourism development in those areas. At the Steering Committee meeting in Kamnik, we dis-

cussed a common approach to research activities, and we also gave a look further it, suggesting how it will be possible for VVA to build a competitive product, starting from LISTEN network and, possibly, enlarging it. In our region, Trentino, the meaning of this project will also be to differentiate the regional product, which, in many cases, focuses on traditional winter sport activities, giving the chance to marginal areas to play their role and gain competitiveness.



Project Partner 3

Development Centre Litija Slovenija

■ Center za razvoj Litija (RCL) is a regional development agency operating in the area of central Slovenia and connecting eight different municipalities. Center za razvoj Litija was established ten years ago and has been managing development projects in the fields of entrepreneurship, tourism and environmental protection. RCL acts as a coordinator of projects, with which it also seeks to establish itself in Europe. With the development of the Srce Slovenije (Heart of Slovenia) trademark, which has been intensively pursued since 2008, RCL aims to establish cooperation in an area ranging from municipalities surrounding Ljubljana to those in the Zasavje region, including Radeče. The Srce Slovenije trademark is becoming synonymous with cordiality of people, quality of stay and diversity of offer.

The "Listen to the Voice of Villages" project involves three pilot areas in the Srce Slovenije area with great possibilities for development of rural tourism: the mountain pastures of the Velika planina plateau, the "charcoal-making country" around Dole and the valley surrounding Jablanica. We have organised several meetings with local guide groups (LGG) where we established the current state and the issues in the areas concerned. Within the scope of the project, we also organised an international working meeting of all partners in the Listen to the Voice of Villages project, which took place on June 16th and 17th in Kamnik. The meeting included a professional excursion to one of the pilot areas, namely Velika planina, where an informational overview map of the entire area has already been installed as part of the project.



Project Partner 4

Bohemian Switzerland Czech Republic

■ In the first half of 2009 the České Švýcarsko o.p.s. company (Bohemian Switzerland public benefit organisation) managed to realize all of the tasks from the Work Plan of the Project. Beginning with WP 2 we set up the Communication plan (including the Action Plan), completed the Media list from all project partners and issued the first project Newsletter. At the Steering Committee in Kamnik, Slovenia, we proposed the Transnational brochure template for approval before its publishing in October 2009. In February we took part at one local fair. Other fairs will follow next year. We also started to publish the Local Leaf-

lets, which brings tourists some important information about towns and villages in our region.

The prearrangements connected to WP4 - Rescuing and reconstructing small historical sacral monuments in territory of Bohemian Switzerland National Park - which will be realized in the second half of this year, have been taken up in collaboration with local university and external providers.

Sounds like we have been pretty busy. But we really enjoyed it! And we hope that the next period will bring more challenges and success as well.



Project Partner 5

Marshal's Office of Opolskie Voivodeship Poland

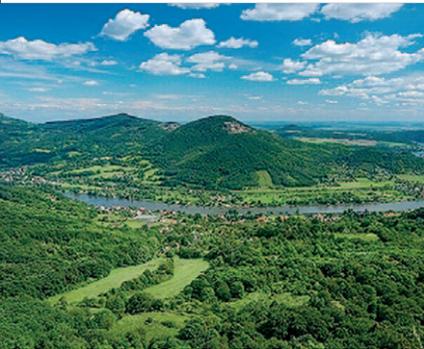
■ “Listen to the voice of villages” is the third European project dedicated to the rural development, implemented in the Opolskie Region – 2 other projects: “Rural Tour” and “Praxis-Making rural entrepreneurship work” were realised during the previous programming period. It is not accidental that the region chooses projects regarding rural areas. The rural development is considered to be the crucial issue if one regards the fact that rural area covers 92% of the total area of the Opolskie Region and rural inhabitants constitute 47% of the total number of inhabitants of the region. The economic transformations which brought about the modifications of the function of village encouraged the local actors to undertake measures in order to develop service functions of villages (tourism services included). In Marshal's Office of Opolskie Voivodeship the project is coordinated by the Community Initiatives Bureau.

Among other regions of Poland the Opolskie Region is not considered to be of a high popularity tourist destination. However, it is enough to go for a short journey through the nearby forests and parks to reach a conclusion that there are a lot of attractions and beautiful places that could attract and fulfil expectations of many tourists. A number of agrotouristic households which appear in the region enable the visitors to rest and experience our region frequently called “the green lungs” of South-Western Poland.

The local villages are modern and multi-functional. The Village Renewal Programme implemented by the Marshal's Office is of great importance for its image. The main objective of the programme is to

stimulate the activity of local communities by enforcement of the project inscribed in the development strategy created by their inhabitants. Thanks to this, the local villages successfully seize opportunities supported by financial assistance from the European Union. Implementation of these activities has resulted in the success of the villages, which attract not only by their appearance but also interesting cultural and economic life.

Realisation of the project in the region is based on Local Action Groups established few years ago within “Lider +” programme. These groups having a great experience gained in the frame of Village Renewal Programme, will give hopefully an important input to the project realisation. Taking the role of GUIDE GROUPS, LAGs are a kind of link between project managers and project stakeholders. During the first meeting, held in May 2009, members of local groups were particularly interested in marketing strategies and new promotion instruments which will result in the growth of tourist's visits from Poland as well as from foreign countries. They also admitted that our region is not a place that can expect mass tourism. We should more concentrate on a small-scale tourism addressed to a group of visitors more demanding, searching for contact with nature and who want to experience some new culture. Thinking about this special “alternative” tourist offers, regional actors have to take into consideration former inhabitants and its descendants settled in Germany after World War II and during the communist regime who are eager to go for a “sentimental journey” searching for family roots and history.



Project Partner 6

Ústí Region Czech Republic

■ Ústí Region joined the project “Listen to the Voices of Villages” and as a pilot area stated the 32 small municipalities situated in the territory hardly affected by mining activities. The predominant part of the landscape has been reclaimed and recultivated. The forests, artificial lakes with absolutely clear

water and the historical monuments in the area represent the basis for tourism development and small scale tourism infrastructure, which is missing at all today. The Region will utilise its own potential, the history of mining, which will be presented in the project output, study tour – The Traces of Mines.



Project Partner 8

District Office Forchheim Department of Economic Development, Germany

■ On the footsteps of a tourist, Daniela Gorsler, project manager of the LISTEN project at the District Office Forchheim, experienced the pilot territory. In more than 20 interviews with tourism managers, LEADER partners, majors, renters of holiday flats, gastronomes, distillers, brewers and agricultural direct marketers, she got manifold impressions and a wide commitment to the project. Highlights were an excursion with a fruit-growing expert through

cherry gardens around the Walberla hill, a tour with a major on ancient sheeps' trails through the municipality of Kunreuth, the jubilee of the Synagogue of Ermreuth and the tastings of handmade farmer's cakes and spicy bread, “Schäufele” and the “Charlemagner” cider – many attractions for “real” tourists. On 4/5 July 2009, LISTEN was presented with an info stand on the fair “900 years Hetzles” in the heart of the pilot territory to inform residents and visitors.



Project Partner 9

University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU) Austria

■ The BOKU Institute of Landscape Development, Recreation and Conservation Planning (PP9) is, together with University of Trento (PP2) developing the core structure for the whole LISTEN project: the definition of new governance tools for the development of sustainable tourism. Never the less, Austria also is in charge of one pilot region. Moschendorf, in the southern part of Austria's most eastern federal state Burgenland, hosted the first meeting with local stakeholders – mayors and representatives of regional development and

tourism organizations. After a concept presentation from the BOKU for establishing/strengthening the renewable energy based tourism in the region, a lively vision related discussion started. This very fruitful and active meeting resulted in many ideas for the development of new specific tourism offers and the improvement of existing ones. In the following weeks and month the project team will proceed in developing a sustainable energy tourism concept for the region which will be presented during the next meeting in autumn.

