

Listen to News

Newsletter for partners of project
Listen to the Voice of Villages

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Editorial

■ Dear Project Partners,
The second issue of Listen to the News Newsletter is just about here to inform you what have really happened within the last 6 months or if you like from the beginning of the project.

Started with the successful project opening we gradually complete our first year's goals and tasks. The main activities were focused on research and analysis - mapping models and government tools - that might be applied on our territories. Furthermore the brand, design and logo of

the Vital Village association, which will be established at the end of the project, was created. We should carry on with these successful activities and finally start to realize our pilot projects during the next year.

Few weeks ago 2 representatives of LP and University of Trento (PP2) managed to visit within a study tour most of the partner's territories. As they want us to share their enjoyable experience with them make yourself comfortable and we wish you a pleasant and thought-provoking reading!
Your PP4 team

Knowing the Partner territories

A delegation composed by one member of the Autonomous Province of Trento (Ms. Lara Torghele for the Lead Partner) and one from the University of Trento (Mr. Paolo Grigolli for the PP2, the partner responsible for the research and analysis - WP3) have visited four Project Partners: the Opolskie Region (Poland - PP5), the Ustí Region (Czech Republic - PP6), the Bohemian Switzerland (Czech Republic - PP4) and the Forchheim District (Germany - PP8).

■ The aim of the study tour was to visit the partner's pilot area, to focus on tour-

ism resources and attractions in the regions through excursion, local stake-



Knowing the Partner territories



Castle in Forchheim

> holders meeting, brainstorming both on the governance system and on the possible idea for pilot projects, and so on. The visit was also the occasion to discuss about general question, problems, suggestion related to the project.

The visit to the pilot territories was made between the 27th October and the 3rd November 2009.

It was not probably the best time of the year to visit those places right in Central Europe because of the winter time approaching, but the warm hospitality of people we met and their willingness to explain us the projects going on made that week and incredible chance to discover unveiled small things and some secrets of the hidden life of people outside the mass route of tourism.

And this made for us a real travel experience we didn't expect at all before.

You may go in a place to confirm the pictures you have seen on internet, on a brochure, on a catalogue, in a movie and this happens everywhere there is an important attraction as the Coliseum in Rome, the Tour Eiffel in Paris, the Big Ben in London... in this case it is a MUST to go there with the same feeling you have when you are a child who wants to complete the "picture cards album" with all the football players in.

Moreover you'd like to have the pictures with the monument AND yourself in, because it is the only way you may say you WERE THERE.

But in the territories visited there are not attractions so important or outstanding to compete with the most fa-

mous in the world, neither the culture of organised hospitality which is a long lasting process, neither the money needed to promote a destination in the tourism market. It is infact in the spirit of the project to look after territories with a minor tourist potential.

So, what made that experience special?

Which are the values and the potentialities of those places looking through the eyes of two Italians, "tourists for chance"?



The landscape of North Bohemia

First of all we say there is a great difference between just seeing things and experience them and that was what happened during the study tour, as all the partners made the best for giving us not only information but meeting with people and their culture, their projects, their passions, their dreams.

And this made the difference.

And enhanced our responsibility, leading a European project.

■ And this happened exploring the Typical Upper Franconian culture with a couple, dressed in traditional costumes, explaining the objects of the small museum they manage or at table with Mr. Dahlmann Schmidt in Mittelehrenbach who gave us the opportunity to see the typical fruit processing (distillery) and an example of ac-



Rocks in Bohemian Switzerland



Upper Franconian traditional costume



Church in Opolskie region

commodation using his former agricultural building as holiday flat. He offered a "Brotzeit" (typical Franconian snack with regional products) and explained the strategy of tourism development in that area as President of the local association of entrepreneurs, starting from almost nothing 20 or more years ago.

■ We never had before the chance to explore an open sky coal mine as the one we saw in the Area of Chomutov in the Czech Republic, both from above using a small piper airplane and from the inside, perfectly organized by the project partner. Again this was more than expected and if it may appear difficult or in some way overwhelming the task to bring tourism there, it seems on the other way interesting and challenging the position of a territory which may consider to start up a strategy from the values and histories they have launching a "future of mining" programme.

■ From the information centre straight into a tricky excursion on foot to the most panoramic routes on the hills in Bohemian Switzerland: this happened thanks to the organization of the Czech project partner who helped us to understand geology, nature, culture of the National Park and the typical architecture deriving from German legacy walking through the Autumn beautiful colours.

And that was a true experience, mentally and physically... Together with a full immersion in the Czech cuisine and later in the... dance...

■ But it happened even visiting the palace owned by a German proprietor in Opolskie region but open for public visits and then to the bee yard for the honey tasting and the presentation of bee inhalator's project for healthy treatment which may become true thanks to the enthusiasm of a young guy...

■ We discovered interests and competencies in the LOHAS philosophy (Lifestyle of Healthy and Sustainability) during a lunch in a small farmhouse tourism company near Maciejów in Poland where all the family is involved in the production of "Slow food" stuff, participated at the event Terra Madre in Turin (Italy) and acts the correct way the relation between environment, people, food and tourism putting in practice what is said in a sophisticated way in most of the manual on sustainability.

And we experienced it was true, while the "five days preparation soup" brought us ancient memories like "Proust's madeleines"...

You may go somewhere and be surprised: this happened in the territories visited by us.

The people living there have a lot of interesting stories to tell you: let them have a VOICE.

Ideas and possible tourism projects to be developed

PP8: Wirtschaftsförderung Landkreis Forchheim (Germany)

■ For what concerns the German pilot territory, the ideas related with the pilot projects to be implemented should combine the offer of local quality food with itineraries made of warm and soft familiar hospitality for the targets belonging to the following clusters:

- Families with young children
- Middle age “slow food” couples
- Groups of friends “dinks” (double income, no kids)



Typical frame house in Forchheim

For any of the **targets** above mentioned, specific activities should be organized on the territory for 2 up to 6 days creating the conditions for real experiences. For instance, an effort should be made to develop trails and paths both for hiking and biking, giving indications about the level of difficulties and timing and the related interest linked to the attraction on field and the local productions.

PP6: Regional authority of the Ustě Region (Czech Republic)

■ Coal mining represents the core of the economy of the region and represents 50% of all the energy supply of Czech Republic. The development of the area has

Another field of action should promote the formal co-operation between tourism and other economic fields: this means that in the near future, farmers and hospitality managers (hotels, B&B, small hotels, manager of restaurants and shops) should combine their effort with the local municipality to create a product club which combines together the offer of the territory.

The Wine Routes existing in Europe are not as just a simple food and wine itinerary, but they embrace a wider and more complex definition that consider it as an organization capable of linking food and wine with tourism and hospitality. Based on this consideration, the wine route business strategic path will consist on increasingly working to create the basic conditions in order to give tourism products and events based on wine and food their proper positioning on the market.

Another area to be dealt with regards **the branding** of the Franconian products and the possibility to put into the mind of the consumers, through its typical products to be found in markets and superstores, the idea of Franconian Switzerland. An “healthy product” links to the idea of an unspoiled territory to visit and this is a possible way to introduce a new destination into a niche market and a more effective **marketing** of the area as a whole as the small entrepreneurs don’t have enough critical mass to get to the market efficiently. As the targets seen above (i.e. dinks and “slow food couples”) are becoming more and more sophisticated in terms of services and quality of hospitality, to **better the quality accommodation standards** and give clear and transparent information to the market is another field of action as the territory needs to attract high spending targets.

to deal with the possibility to promote through cultural and MICE tourism the unique values, know-how and competencies of the territory linking together the different communities. As the mining concessions will be in place up to the year 2070, it seems important to understand which are the values connected with min-

ing and the perspective of the population and this may even give some important suggestions for the pilot projects too.

If North West Mining Co. has a co-operative approach and helps the local authority in different social programmes, on the other hand it is important to study the networking strategy with the University, the schools, the associations on the territory on one side and the tourism management on the other side.

If the **concept of the area becomes “the future of mining”** all the activities to be thought should tell stories and make the people live experiences and have thematic experience related to the following items:

- Green technology
- Re-cultivation
- Sustainability
- Energy saving

The pilot areas should focus on the future showing what is changing there as an example for the world, creating experiences for specific target groups such as:

- Engineers
- Ambientalists
- Geologists
- Primary and Secondary school in Czech Republic
- Visitors

Here, more than somewhere else, tourism can play a multiplier effect to show to specific targets of people (see above) the values and know-how developed, to increase

PP4: Bohemian Switzerland public service organization (Czech Republic)

■ The Destination Management Organization (DMO) created here in forms of a NGO involving all the stakeholders of the territory seems ready to carry on a tour-

the feeling of belonging of the population, to stimulate innovation through the benchmark with other experiences, to enhance even the pride of local people.

The first three targets mentioned above may constitute the basis for the development of a MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Congress and Event) sector in order to attract professional people from other countries affected by the same questions related with mining.

An important role to be played by the Local Authority, and a possible pilot project, would be to create a kind of “**Convention Bureau**” which stimulates and organizes meetings and events.

For what concerns the **target of school children and visitors** and external visitors (not experts), the living experiences have to be created using the facilities of the North West Company creating specific path in the area of mines where it is possible to walk and understand the processes of mining and energy supply.



Flight trip organized by PP6

ist development which involves the German side of the natural area.

This level of cooperation is highly recommended in order to further increase the exchanges in the region and to focus on the tourism product “active holiday” for families with small children (up to 16 years), hikers and active people and “Lohas” people (lifestyle of health and sustainability).

Ideas and possible tourism projects to be developed

> The destination management organization is actively involved in promoting the area and already produced descriptive brochures for each village of the area and it is working for:

- Improving the conditions for the accessibility and parking of the area (and in future thinking about train + shuttle / bike services)
- Putting clear signs on the road to enter the Park area
- Bettering the indications on trails about timing and difficulties
- Creating a sustainable adventure park for children (and adults too) in the park
- Enhancing the standard of the accommodation and their market availability
- Promoting horsing and biking and other activities to enjoy the National Park
- Discovering other way of attracting people (i.e. bird watching and leaf peeping)
- Develop a web marketing appropriate with the promotion of the territory

The area has an interesting asset in terms of churches, crosses and other symbols of the difficult relations between Christians and Protestants and some activities or events may be created in this field through a coherent use of the religious and artistic signs, of some specific paths linked to a religious experience as we know that "tradition is an innovation which remains in place"...



Typical architecture of Bohemian Switzerland

PP5: Marshal's office of the Opolskie Region (Poland)

- Taking into consideration previous experiences and activities undertaken by local society and authorities aiming at stimulate tourism on rural areas of the



Private Palace in Opolskie region opened for public visits

Opolskie Region, the two areas indicated for the pilot projects are "Dinosaur's Land" and Kluczbork-Olesno Land (Milk and Honey land).

The first area is actually interested by different projects because of paleontological discoveries in the territory considered of European importance.

In the Dinosaur's land the activities actually developed for families with children and active people in the area are hiking and canoeing due to the beauty of nature and the water system, but the concession given for 99 years to a private investor for exploiting the paleontological site is to be taken into consideration to support the possibility for the small entrepreneurs to take part into the development of the area.

This means the Local Authority should create the conditions for the small business to enter in the network of the providers of the Dinosaur's Park (accommodation, restaurant, other services) and the local farmers should supply with local products. At the same time the private

investor should help the territory investing in some important sector such as sewage and water treatment, strategic for the area.

The opportunity and the menaces of the area of Dinosaurs Park deals with relation to the private investors. On one hand it is clear that only a big amount of capital may create a real attraction and market it, but on the other hand if the tourist is held within the boundaries of the Park the small business around may have only negative effects (pollution, traffic jams, increasing in the price of land and houses...).

The most strategic pilot project should focus on **branding the area and create a product club** combining together the offer of the territory under the brand name Dinosaur's Land, to be use as an umbrella brand for everything dealing with that territory.

As the area still maintains an interesting potential to develop active holidays for the following for families with young children, active people and schoolboys, there should be an interest to develop cycling, hiking, horse riding, water sport and cross country ski tourism

The Milk and Honey land is seen as an open-minded region where the local society seems ready for the implementation of new solutions in terms of organizations of tourism services and the offer of local quality food with itineraries together with warm and soft familiar hospitality for middle age "slow food" couples looking for relax and families with young children.

For milk and honey is necessary to create a brand in order to let the place be known and to have better market condition dealing with the trade.

Honey may become a possible tool to attract visitors in search of new experiences in the field of therapy and wellness.

An alliance with the international "Slow food" movement may help to have some special recognition of the local products, while the farm-house tourism will soon be developed into **didactic farms** where children may find the real contact with nature and animals.

Old kitchen receipts and summer schools for men and women using the traditional products may be created in the farmhouses too.

Paolo Grigolli and Lara Torghelle

