

TOURAGE states seniors as the opportunity in tourism market

TOURAGE project organized its 3rd Annual Conference on May 13th in Rzeszów (Poland), hosted by the Marshal's Office of Podkarpackie Region. The conference addressed the theme of senior tourism market and highlighted that seniors are an important target group in the tourism sector, encouraging entrepreneurs and other tourism actors to develop new tourism products and services for the senior segment or improve already existing ones or even involve seniors in the process of creating new tourism offers.

Two parallel discussion panels were organized to discuss if there is suitable offer aimed towards senior tourists, how these products and services are marketed and if there is a proper staff and infrastructure for aged tourists.

During the conference same statements were raised:

- There are several types of tourists, including senior tourists and this should be remembered when selling and marketing tourism products. All tourism products offered to seniors should be well planned because this target group has wide experience in travelling and has high quality requirements. *(Mr. Jerzy Ruć, University of Rzeszów, Poland)*
- Gender marketing is important as high numbers of senior travelers are women. Seniors' needs should be researched well enough to be able to develop new products for them. Despite that, seniors may even avoid using services and products which are marketed as especially suited and developed for older people. *(Aija van der Steina, University of Latvia)*

You can find the summary of the TOURAGE 3rd Annual Conference [here](#)



TOURAGE Annual conference offered speeches by experts in senior tourism



TOURAGE Good practice brochure first available in the 3rd Annual Conference



Parallel discussion panels explored the possibilities to develop senior tourism in Europe

New brochure „Good Practices for Senior tourism” has been published

In spring 2014, TOURAGE project issued a brochure “Good Practices for Senior tourism”. A total of five good practices have been collected from each of the partner regions during the project implementation. These good practices identify methods which take seniors into account with regard to tourism development. Thus altogether, 55 good practices have been selected for this brochure as examples of how to tackle ageing in the tourism sector, increase regions’ competitiveness in this regard and illustrate how to promote active ageing. The selection has been made during several project workshops, learning cafes and through voting in order to identify the most interesting and transferable practices.



Good practices are divided into two main sections – Supply and Services and Structural Solutions. The sections include five sub-themes which cover a wide variety of tourism topics including: Active and Nature, Culture and History, Health and Wellbeing, Accessibility and Organization. Colored margins are used in the brochure to easily distinguish these different sub-themes. The main conclusions have been summarised in the policy recommendations that are available at the end of the brochure. More information on each good practice and the project can be found on www.tourage.eu

We hope you enjoy the examples and find new inspiring ideas for your work!

REGISTRATION FOR THE TOURAGE FINAL CONFERENCE IS OPEN!

We have a pleasure to announce that
the Project “TOURAGE – Developing Senior Tourism in Remote Regions”

organizes its

FINAL CONFERENCE

“Developing Senior Tourism in Remote Regions – Experiences and the Way Forward”

18th of September, 2014

In Brussels, Belgium

Find further details and [register for the conference](http://www.tourage.eu) on the project website:

www.tourage.eu



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TOURAGE project and Senior Tourism raise interest in Europe

TOURAGE project was selected among the 20 best European tourism projects that enhance sustainable tourism development. Altogether around 200 EU projects from different funding programmes were evaluated.

TOURAGE project represents especially social and economic sustainability as its objective is to find means to improve tourism industry, enhance economy and employment throughout the year in remote and border regions and to promote active ageing.

The selection was made by the PESTO project (Promoting and networking of EU projects on sustainable tourism) which aim is to provide a platform for enhancing sustainable tourism and raise awareness about the topic. Evaluation was made by the international PESTO consortium who either work in the field of education and training for sustainable tourism

development or who are familiar with the tourist industries' demands. They evaluated for example the innovativeness and relevance of the projects.

The nomination means that TOURAGE will participate in the PESTO conference organized in Austria in October. Furthermore, an article about the project will be published in the Focus Europe Magazine, in addition to other promotional and networking activities.

PESTO project is coordinated by European Network for Transfer and Exploitation of EU Project Results (E.N.T.E.R.), nonprofit association which is located in Graz, Austria. Project has been funded with support from the European Commission (Lifelong Learning Programme).

Read more about the PESTO project [here](#) and E.N.T.E.R. network [here](#).



What are the needs of senior tourists?

Based on the analysis of 1704 questionnaires filled in by senior citizens in 12 European regions taking part in the TOURAGE project, a brochure "What are the needs of senior tourists in the TOURAGE regions" has been issued. This survey reveals the travelling habits, motivations and needs of regional seniors that are on retirement pension. The results of this questionnaire can be employed in the development of regional tourism services for senior tourists in order to meet the needs of senior citizens and in the improvement of regional, national and EU level tourism policies.

Some conclusions of the survey:

After analyzing the data it can be concluded that age is usually not an obstacle to tourism – even the older seniors (80+) are interested in tourism activities, and they should receive specific services according to their needs and interests. It is important to highlight that seniors are a colourful group of individuals ranging from active citizens to those with disabilities. There should be different services and assistance for younger and older seniors and diverse offer.

The seniors are ready to travel abroad also during their retirement years, however, their willingness may decrease if service providers do not understand their specific needs. The regional strategies should focus

better on how to reach international senior tourists, and how to attract them into their respective regions. The survey shows that nature, safety, historical sites, quality of services and easy transportation connections are the most significant attributes of a holiday destination that attract seniors toward them. Doing heavy physical activities, sports, snow, making handicrafts, dancing, camping and city life, on the other hand, are activities that may not interest many senior travelers.

The main barriers to travel are financial reasons and health problems. For this reason, social support schemes or other senior discounts or affordable off-season products and packages should be created to make it possible for these groups to get involved in tourism. Also it is important to note that the lack of interesting supply is a barrier for many seniors. This highlights the fact that it is important to study the actual needs, interests and motivations of seniors and develop products which they are interested in. This can be supported with the regional, national and EU level (senior) tourism strategies.

Full text of the brochure "What are the needs of senior tourists in the TOURAGE regions" is available [here](#)

Study visits in Hungary and Poland

Targeted tourism development approach evaluated in Szabolcs –Szatmar-Bereg County (Hungary)

In the first half of April TOURAGE team met in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County (Hungary) to evaluate five good practices offered to develop senior tourism. Several partners of TOURAGE were interested in development of religious tourism routes and reconstruction of churches as religion is an important part of tourism and often popular among the seniors, mainly in the regions neighboring countries next to Hungary. For others it was a great experience to see how to attract more tourists to come and visit the region. It is successfully done by networking of different entrepreneurs as well as involving also local people to offer different types of activities and fulfill demand.

During the study visit TOURAGE was introduced to the program called “**Faith and Health**”, TOURAGE partners experienced “**Gastronomic journey in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County**” and “**Hajdúszoboszló Tourism Destination Management**” was presented, as well as a programme “**Route of medieval churches**” was introduced to the partnership. Find out more [here](#)



TOURAGE partners visiting medieval wooden churches in Szabolcs-Szatmar-Bereg county (Hungary)

Podkarpackie region (Poland) presents accessible tourism offers for seniors

In May 2014 representatives of Podkarpackie region (Poland) presented five good practices in senior tourism that are easy to transfer to other regions. In **the Old Travelers Club** seniors meet once a week to participate in lectures, exhibitions, presentations and discussions. In the **Pottery Farm in Medynia Głogowska** workshops are annually organized from spring till autumn. The farm Manager with the extraordinary knowledge of local pottery traditions introduced the concept of the pottery center and the tourism activities that are spreading over the village. The next good practice, the Universal Sensual Garden, provides easy access to people in wheelchairs or to people with physical disabilities, or vision defects. A network of Nordic walking routes and ecological guided tours are provided for visitors in **Nordic Walking Centre near the Myczkowce lake**.

Find out more [here](#)



Sensual garden in Podkarpackie region (Poland) offers accessible paths for everybody



TOURAGE Good Practice transfer: Voluntary senior guides ready to guide tours in Vidzeme region

Following the plan to transfer at least one good practice during the project TOURAGE, Vidzeme Planning Region found interesting one of the good practices offered by Granada region in Spain. The good practice “Cultural Volunteers program of Parque del las Ciencias” is about senior guides - volunteers working in the local museum and guiding tours for seniors. In a quite similar way good practice now has been transferred to Amata County located in Vidzeme region to give trainings to those 15 interested seniors who expressed a will to become volunteer companions for the tourists coming to Amata County. It is planned that trained seniors will guide senior groups, children excursions and also families with children.

For two months, every weekend seniors of Amata county came together to learn specific topics of guiding to become successful companions. They learnt about the specifics of being volunteer companions, interpretation techniques and together opened Amata taste, smell, sound and thought out original county gift ideas. Seniors were very welcomed to become a part of county tourism developers.

It is sure that this kind of activities provide supportive environment for intergenerational communication, improve the quality of life for seniors as well as valuable potential of seniors is being used.



Granada and the Entrepreneurs set tourism as an engine for rural development

In 20th of May, the County Council of Granada, through the employment and provincial development Department, organized the participatory workshops - **Capacity of the Tourism as an Engine for Rural Development**. The main objective of this meeting was to bring entrepreneurs new business opportunities that are being opened in the rural tourism sector.

These workshops were organized in the framework of TOURAGE and Cesr Projects (INTERREG IVC Programme, co-financed by European Funds of Regional Development), which main aim is to promote the identification of Good Practices and the exchange of experiences in the rural tourism sector at European level.

This meeting was held in Trópoli Interpretative Centre, in Valley of Zalabí, and entrepreneurs of the province participated willing to share experiences. So they identified new opportunities and created business networks allowing the rural tourism sector of the province become a real engine for the economic development of rural areas.

The tourism is a very changing industry and the evolution is an essential strategy for the commercialization of touristic resources. Topics discussed in the meeting were related to marketing,

new sale channels and social networks.

Furthermore, the assistants participated in three rotatory activities where they worked intensively on such important issues as the followings: Complete the accommodation offer with local services to encourage the employment; Reflection about the clients profile; Accessibility and senior tourism. The senior population is becoming one of the most important segments of age in rural tourism. It is important to adapt our rural and nature tourism offer for this clients` profile.

Lastly and as an example how to do other ways of rural tourism to improve our offer, three successful experiences developed in other regions with more tradition in this sector were explained. These examples are related to ecotourism, marketing of adapted rural tourism and complementary activities and services to the accommodation offer to stimulate the local employment.

As a result of this meeting, after more than 10 hours of work, the entrepreneurs expressed their satisfaction with the use of such a practical methodology, new ideas emerged to incorporate to their services and touristic products, and they left hoping to participate in similar future meetings which allows them to advance their business strategies.



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TOURAGE project took part in Tourism Parliament event in North Karelia

TOURAGE project had a stand in Tourism Parliament event where it promoted its outputs and results for regional stakeholders. The brand-new project publication "Good Practices for Senior Tourism" was handed out to the participants: tourism entrepreneurs, representatives of development agencies, educational institutions and other tourism organizations and actors. The event was organized on 3rd June 2014 at the premises of Koli Freetime tourism company in North Karelia, Finland.

The aim of the Tourism Parliament was to introduce and discuss the North Karelian Tourism Operational programme 2014-2020 with regional stakeholders. Regional Council of North Karelia started to prepare the programme at the beginning of 2014. Its objective is to identify the measures and themes that will lead to the development and growth of tourism in the region. Regional tourism enterprises and other stakeholders

were actively involved in the preparation process. For example, two public consultations were implemented online and comments were carefully analyzed by a steering group appointed for the programme work. In Tourism Parliament it was also possible to comment and give feedback to the programme.

Also TOURAGE project took actively part in the programme development. It has been acknowledged that demographic change will have an effect on the tourism market and estimated that ageing will increase the demand for wellbeing tourism. During the preparation of the programme for the programming period 2014-2020 it has been discussed that by investing in senior tourism marketing, sales and developing suitable products for senior travelers it would be possible to prolong the tourism season to low and medium seasons. The prospects for senior tourism development seem rather promising in North Karelia.



Launch of the Senior Cultural Volunteers Programme: Galway City Museum

The Senior Cultural Volunteers Programme was officially launched on the 26th June 2014 in the Galway City Museum by the Mayor of Galway City, Councillor Donal Lyons. The Good Practice was proposed by the County Council of Granada, Andalucía, Spain and adopted by the Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly through the co-operation of the Galway City Museum and the members of the Active Retirement Associations located in Galway.

Mr. Shane Winters presented an overview of the TOURage project in terms of the work achieved to date and the overall aim of the project. The Acting Director of Galway City Museum, Mr. Brendan McGowan, spoke in detail on the proposed programme in the Galway City Museum and put forward a number of aims to encourage Senior Cultural Volunteers:-

- To act as Museum Tour Guides/Ambassadors;
- To participate in Museum Led Projects;
- To facilitate Workshops within the Museum space;

- To assist with the provision of exhibitions and act in an advisory role with Museum activities.

Following a tour of city museum, there was an open discussion with the participants to further discuss the ideas put forward by Mr. McGowan and to encourage senior volunteers to come forward and look at how they might get involved, and spread the word to others who may be interested. A significant number of seniors present at the event signed up to participate in the proposed Senior Cultural Volunteer Programme and agreed to engage with other potential Senior Volunteers in order to promote further interest.

For more information on the Senior Cultural Volunteers Programme in the Galway City Museum please contact Mr. Brendan McGowan at; Brendan.McGowan@galwaycity.ie or the BWW Regional Assembly at; westrega@eircom.net.



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Silver Sharing Initiative: Multiculturalism, chances of active ageing

For many years now, the Federation of Social Organisations of Warmia-Mazury Region (FOSA) has been implementing measures to raise standards of the elderly's life. Our federation consists of several dozen senior citizen organizations. We develop social programs which aim at the improvement of the quality of life of the elderly. Our solutions stand out for the high level of senior citizen participation, in line with the 'nothing about us without us' principle, which simultaneously ensures a flexible and systemic method. We look for new solutions, yet well-tried by other institutions, which we implement and evaluate in order to streamline and verify our actions. Senior Citizen Ombudsman's Office and Friendly Neighbor are the best examples of the above.

FOSA strives to meet the expectations of senior citizens and offers an original method – Silver Sharing Initiative. It is focused on the development of active aging in three areas – social participation, education and tourism. It becomes part of a new trend in social development and tourism that bases upon available resources. For many years now, there have been a number of popular tourist solutions implemented internationally, i.e. home exchange or coach surfing, youth tourism and school exchange in particular. It was them to inspire us to come up with a similar method made for senior citizens, i.e. Silver Sharing Initiative. While looking for offers or ideas tailored to the elderly and their specific needs, we concluded there was no solution, at least in Europe, to facilitate general tourism of the elderly. Hence, we decided to propose our own method, flexible and tailored to the needs of the elderly.

Silver Sharing is based upon cooperation of two (or more) senior citizen organizations from different regions/countries. Each one delegates a group of people to pay a visit to a partner organization, whose members provide accommodation, either in private premises or hostels, let the guests explore the area and participate in scheduled cultural programs. Silver Sharing Initiative determines and regulates the frames of every visit in a comprehensible way. Taking up cooperation under Silver Sharing, an organization receives a packet of useful information, including preliminary agreements and a practical guide to the method and its implementation.

Read more [here](#)



Take part in Warmia Mazury Senior Games 2014



Warmia Mazury Senior Games is one of the TOURage good practices in Warmia Mazury Region, in Poland. So we kindly invite everybody to take part in these international senior games. Registration for the international competition Warmia Mazury Senior Games 2014, which will stretch from 28 to 31 August 2014 has started. The only condition for participation in the event is age – participants must be at least 45 for individual disciplines and 40 for team sports. The electronic registration for the event will be open until 21st August.

Detailed information about the event can be found on the official website: <http://en.seniorgames.pl/>



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About TOURAGE

The project has grown out from the idea that although Demographic Change brings many challenges it can also bring opportunities to the regions. Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the Europe and relatively remote regions have both a lot of unexploited and unknown development potential in this regard. The project seeks to identify good practices on developing tourism possibilities for growing segment of elderly travelers. More about the project find [here](#)

- ❖ [Regional Council of North Karelia](#) Lead Partner **Finland**
- ❖ [Bourgas Regional Tourist Association](#) **Bulgaria**
- ❖ [Region of East Macedonia & Thrace](#) **Greece**
- ❖ [Lake Balaton Development Coordination Agency](#) **Hungary**
- ❖ [Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Regional Development and Environmental Management Agency](#) **Hungary**
- ❖ [West Regional Authority](#) **Ireland**
- ❖ [Vidzeme Planning Region](#) **Latvia**
- ❖ [Association of Polish Communes of Euroregion Baltic](#) **Poland**
- ❖ [Podkarpackie Region](#) **Poland**
- ❖ [County Council of Granada](#) **Spain**
- ❖ [Regional Development Agency of the Prešov Self-Governing Region](#) **Slovakia**



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