

Ready for PESTO? Promotion and networking in the midst of sustainable tourism

Tourism is one of the largest economic sectors in Europe and has become a global business with an unmanageable number of target groups, stakeholders and key actors, representing different interests, perspectives, demands and needs. In this setting, tourism is linked to many risks and it takes a lot of know-how, experience and competence to perform successfully in the different markets. It is not enough to just seeing the economic potential of tourism as having unlimited growth but much more, its destructive dimension and the limited resources must also be considered.

These problems have been evident for a very long time and therefore the concept of “sustainable tourism” was developed, which generally speaking tries to interfere as little as possible with environment and local culture whilst improving local development and employment at the same time.

Nowadays, sustainable tourism plays a key role in each major development policy. The importance of sustainable tourism developments is also reflected in many EU projects in different funding programmes such as the Lifelong Learning Programme, that have the concept as main topic in their activities. So far there have been no attempts to link those initiatives with each other, developing formal/informal networks between the project partnerships, allowing them to learn from each other and providing them with special opportunities and platforms for promoting their projects and activities to target groups, stakeholders and the general public. PESTO seeks to improve this situation.

Objectives

PESTO aims at:

- Raising general public awareness of the issue of sustainable tourism developments in Europe, including the presentation of general EU policies, opportunities, risks, chances and benefits in this context as well as the introduction of Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers and educational counsellors specialised in this field
- Attracting citizens from all over Europe to the concepts, opportunities, benefits and possibilities of sustainable tourism
- Promoting European policy and funding opportunities for lifelong learning and VET, especially in connection with sustainable tourism developments
- Supporting EU projects dealing with sustainable tourism in their activities to disseminate their project ideas and in building up reliable networks for stakeholders and target groups
- Providing several platforms where all relevant target groups and stakeholders (e.g. VET providers, policy makers from local to EU level, representatives of tourism enterprises, environmentalist associations and NGOs, unions, chambers of commerce, representatives of EU funding bodies etc.) can meet, discuss and push forward the issue of sustainable tourism in Europe for its economic and ecological development.

Outcomes

- Collection of 20 good practice projects from different funding programmes dealing with sustainable tourism developments
- A two-day conference in Graz (Austria) in October 2014, during which concepts, perspectives, interests and demands can be presented and discussed as well as good practice projects and initiatives are displayed at the project fair that accompanies the event.
- Release of special edition of the European magazine “Focus Europe” on the topic of sustainable tourism developments
- PESTO Video Clip

Contact

Austria (Coordinator)

E.N.T.E.R. – European Network for Transfer and Exploitation of EU Project Results

Ms. Petra Kampf

Email: petra.kampf@enter-network.eu

Germany

Ernst-Moritz-Arndt University Greifswald

Mr. Wilhelm Steingrube

Email: steingru@uni-greifswald.de

United Kingdom

Grŵp Llandrillo Menai

Mr. Shyam Patiar

Email: s.patiar@gllm.ac.uk

Turkey

ICOC – Istanbul Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Çağdaş Özenmis

Email: cagdaz.ozenmis@ito.org.tr

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