Община Струмяни

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HELLENIC REPUBLIC
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Europe for Citizens Programme

Programme objectives:

Under the overall aim of bringing the Union closer to citizens the general objectives are:

- to contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its history and diversity;
- to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level.

The Programme's specific objectives are:

- raise awareness of remembrance, common history and values and the Union's aim that is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples by stimulating debate, reflection and development of networks;
- encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level, by developing citizens' understanding of the Union policy making-process and promoting opportunities for societal and intercultural engagement and volunteering at Union level.

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Structure of the Europe for Citizens Programme:

The Programme is implemented through two Strands and a horizontal Action:

Strand 1: European remembrance: Raise awareness of remembrance, common history and values and the Union's aim.

Strand 2: Democratic engagement and civic participation: Encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level. Measures in this strand are:

- Town Twinning
- Networks of Towns
- Civil Society Projects

Horizontal Action: Valorisation: Analysis, dissemination and use of project results.

There are two types of grants:

ACTION GRANTS can be granted for projects (within both strands), i.e. for actions with a limited lifetime during which proposed specific activities are implemented.

OPERATING GRANTS are different from action grants in that they provide financial support for costs required for the proper conduct of the usual and permanent activities of an organisation.

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Authentic Europe Project

Aims and Objectives:

The project's main objective is to create a sustainable Network of small municipalities with little experience at European level in order to facilitate international cooperation and exchange of good practices among them in the field of rural tourism. More specifically the project aims are:

- to encourage a fuller exploitation of the existing natural and cultural resources in the rural areas, encompassing folk arts (music, dance, and rituals), ethnography, customs, traditional food and beverage, handicrafts, natural healing practices etc.;
- to introduce tools and methods for effective networking to stakeholders;
- to promote sustainability, competitiveness and respect of local identities; to reinforce the sense of European citizenship by strengthening the relations between European local communities.

The target groups are: public authorities, citizens; youth; seniors; small and medium businesses; cultural and tourism organizations.

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Authentic Europe Project

Six International Events Were Held During the Project:

- The Kick off meeting in Bulgaria: During this event the project partners got together to discuss and approve the management, communication and dissemination activities, as well as to draft some operative perspectives for the upcoming events and the work of the consortium in general.

- The Workshop: "Challenges and best practices for conservation and management of natural environment, cultural sites and local traditions" in Italy: The event invited the participants to identify their common challenges in rural tourism development, to discuss best practices and the EU policies in the field and to identify measures for joint actions.

- The Round table and public debate: "Citizens and governance - Towards networking and active involvement of citizens" in Greece focused on the further involvement of citizen in decision-making, strategy building and networking.

-The Educational workshop "Turning traditional magical practices into tourist attractions" in Malta involved interactive theoretical and practical training, targeted primarily at local

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The „Building strong destination image“ workshop in Bulgaria focused on the building of strong destination image, differentiating the tourism offer and building a unique “brand” of the Network , as well as on the achieved results and future development of the Network.

The “Rural tourism and entrepreneurship” forum in Spain will focus on the importance of inter-generational learning, the preservation of the intangible heritage and its implications for rural tourism and entrepreneurship.

The Authentic Europe Web Portal - www.authen.eu - was also created to represent the Network, and provide up to date and useful information related to the activities of the Network, as well as useful information related to the development of Rural Europe.

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The Kick off Meeting

The Kick-off meeting was held in Strumyani, Bulgaria in the period 24-26 October 2014, where representatives of the 5 European partners gathered to lay the foundation of the network, the rules and principles for management, coordination, communication, evaluation 0and dissemination. During the three – day long workshops the partners presented and discussed the rural tourism offer of their respective municipalities, their needs and challenges, as well as possible solutions to be sought through networking. The exchange of experiences and know-how allowed the experts to identify the common ground for cooperation. The kick-off meeting was organized during the international folklore festival "Maleshevo Sings and Dances", which allowed the host, not only

to

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The Kick off Meeting

demonstrate its intangible heritage and its tourism use, but also allowed for a wider discussion and exchange of good practices with invited guests - local authorities' representatives from Romania, FYROM, Turkey and Serbia. The meeting brought together 18 international project participants and guests and over 100 locals.

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The Workshop: "Challenges and best practices for conservation and management of natural environment, cultural sites and local traditions" in Italy

The Workshop: Challenges and best practices for conservation and management of natural environment, cultural sites and local traditions was held in Mandas, Italy in the period 16 – 18 January 2015. The challenges and practices in the conservation and management of natural environment, cultural sites and local traditions in Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, Italy and Malta were presented and participants worked to identify their common challenges in the field, discussed best practices from the

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The Workshop: "Challenges and best practices for conservation and management of natural environment, cultural sites and local traditions" in Italy

from the different localities as well as the possibilities for adapting and implementing them in different territories, taking into account the specificities of each region. The European dimension was strengthened by the European policies in the Tourism sector and sustainable tourism development presentation, which led the way to the discussion on the joint strategies and measures for joint actions to be identified and agreed, including strengthening the cooperation among the different sectors for optimizing the rural tourism offer in the Network in line with the EU policies in the field; conceptualizing the Network common development strategy, integrating all sectors and citizens, etc. The workshop brought together 40 international participants who met and worked together with over 100 local experts and citizens.

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Turning traditional magical practices into tourist attractions - working with local authorities

- **Introduction**
- The idea of this common presentation, prepared by Bulgarian and Italian team, is to be presented four best practices showing different manners of turning **traditional magical practices into tourist attractions - working with the local authorities.**
- Two best practices from Italy
- Two best practices from Bulgaria

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Presentations of the best practices:

- 1.First Italian best practice is **Transhumance** .
- 2.Second Italian best practice is **Fest of Sant'Efisio.**

- 1.First Bulgarian best practice is **St.Lazar's day Ritual.**
- 2.Second Bulgarian best practice is **International Folklor Festival "Maleshevo sings and dances".**

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Transhumance

- It is an **ancient practice** which consist in the **seasonal movement of the shepherds with their flocks**, it implies the movement from mountains to plains before winter and vice versa in the summer.

- This is a real adventure that until the fifties of the last century animated streets and trails of the island

- **TRAMUDAS project:** Transhumance has become now, thanks to the initiative of the GALs (Local action groups), a tourist attracti on which allow tourists to discover the history, culture and environment of Sar dinia Island.

- UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage

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- The aim of the project is to **revitalize the agro-pastoral culture** retracting the same steps made by the shepherds and converting them into **new forms of touristic travels**.

- The **main products** of this project are:
  - the map of transhumance
  - cultural tourism circuits and guided trails with appropriate signage
  - a guide book
  - a website www.tramudas.com

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Funding: the project is founded by the Programme **LEADER +** which is an European programme for rural areas

Main organizers: - GAL Mari e Monti
- GAL Barbagie e Mandrolisai
- GAL Ogliastra

Period: All year long. Tramudas is a product that allows to extend the tourist season, in view of the integration of products "Sea – Mountain"

Participants: Local, domestic and international tourists

Audience: Tourists in general

Importance:

- ✓ **recovery** of these **historical trails** in a tourist key
- ✓ **local development** : the local farms are an integral part of the transhumance product as they offer shepherds products to tourist s
- ✓ a way to **reduce the seasonality**
- ✓ **interaction with other Sardinian cultural events** linked to intangible cultural heritage (eg. Autumn in Barbagia, etc.)

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Fest of Sant'Efisio

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1. Origin and symbolization of the ritual

In 1652 the plague was raging in Sardinia. The authorities of Cagliari sought aid making a **solemn vow to Sant'Efisio**, a Roman soldier who had promised to protect forever the city and its inhabitants. With this vow, the municipality promised to take th e statue of the Saint in procession from the place where he was imprisoned (city center) to the beach of Nora, The plague ended. Since then, every year Cagliari fulfills its vow.

1. Performance

The Fest of Sant'Efisio assembles the devoted to the Saint , the tradition dresses and the colours of entire Sardinia in **a moving and grand procession**.

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2. Period of organization

The Feast of Sant'Efisio is celebrated **each year from 1st to 4th of May**.

3. Participants and audience

Participants: Local population from all over the island, tourist

Audience: local population, national and international tourists

4. Main organisers of the ritual

The **Arciconfraternita del Gonfalone di Sant 'Efisio**, one of the oldest lay and popular associations in Cagliari, created with a papal bull by Paul III in 1539.

5. Funding of the Ritual

- Autonomous Region of Sardinia
- Municipality of Cagliari;
- Self-financing through the sale of tickets;

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6. Importance of the Ritual

- ✓ It is the most important in the Mediterranean basin with the **participation of thousands of people, many of whom come from all over Sardinia and from dozens of countries around the world** .
- ✓ In 2014 the Municipality of Cagliari has started the procedure to inscribe the Rite in the **Represenative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** in order to guarantee a greater visibility and consciousness about cultural heritage and its preservation, as well as to raise awareness towards the importance of the collective goods and cultural resources for the social, economic and democratic progress of our community.

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St.Lazar's Day in Strumyani Municipality

1.Origin and symbolism

- The **St.LAZAR'S DAY** is celebrated every year on Saturday – one week before Easter in Bulgaria and in all Orthodox world as well.
- It shows the beginning of Easter celebrations and it is always i n the **Spring time** when the nature "**wakes up**" for new life.
- This celebration and all rituals during the day are related to t he Spring, the fertility and the prolongation of life and family.

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3.Participants and Performance

- Young girls early in the morning go up in the mountain to pick u p flowers and osier. They knit chaplets and sing ritual songs.
- In this ritual participate only girls on age for getting married . They wear special “folklore costumes” showing their status of soon getting married girls.
- After that the young girls, called “**LAZARKI**”, go to the church where on that day there is an orthodox service dedicated to **St.Lazar**.
- After the Service they receive gifts and blessing from the pries t and start **walking from home to home** to spread among the people this blessing for fertility, health and prolongation of the families.

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- At every house these **"LAZARKI" girls** sing ritual songs for blessing householders, their children, animals, plants and even bees.
- According to the tradition these girls receive eggs and gifts.
- It is very important **"LAZARKI" girls** to come in every house, because that household will be blessed for the whole year.
- This ritual finishes on the next morning when the **"LAZARKI" girls** float their osier chaplets into rivers.

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4.Organizers of the Ritual

- "**Lazarki" girls** are dancers and singers from the folklore groups from the **Community centers**.
- For **preserving** this ritual in present days the Teachers in the **Kindergarden** organize the young 4,5 and 6 years old girls to participate in all these acti vities.
- They start learning the songs in the Community centers and in th e Kindergarden minimum 3 months in advance.
- **Strumyani Municipality provides 3 persons for organizing the event:**
- **An employee** who is in charge to coordinate the schedule visits of the groups 2 weeks before the real Fest;
- **PR employee** who is in charge to advertise in different media the event befor e and after its happening ;
- **One photographer**.

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5. Funding

- Funding of this Ritual is not expensive.
- There is only a first investment for buying and delivery of the Folklore costumes of the participants.
- After that salaries and fees for Community centers ' managers, teachers, PR-employee and the photographer.
- Information for the event is mainly spread through the local new spapers, web sites, touristic centers and facebook profiles.

6. Audience and importance of the ritual

- This ritual has mainly local importance, but it has enormous opportunities to attract and be enjoyed by tourists. It happens in **Spring time** when is the high tourist season for Strumyani region and near Spa resort Sandanski.
- The beautiful mountain nature "wakes up" early in South – Western Bulgaria where are located the villages of Strumyani Municipality.
- These factors, together with the magnificent and colorful **St.Lazar's day ritual** become and exquisite attraction for tourists who would like to touch a unique tradition, beauty and gorgeous nature.

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International Folklore Festival "Maleshevo sings and dances"

- **1.Origin and symbolism**
- "Maleshevo sings and dances" Folklore Festival is founded in 2004 with the idea to keep and to popularize the local folklore heritage. Sin ce that period the Festival has become an international event and step by step till nowadays it is among **the five best festivals in Bulgaria**.
- The idea for its origin and organization was born among the loca l people and the Municipality administration.

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2. Period of organization and performance

- This **International Folklore Festival** is organized every year at the end of October in the biggest village of Strumyani Municipality called Mikrevo village. This period is chosen to match with the annual celebrat ion of the village dedicated of **St.Dimitrius Day on 26th of October.**
- The **International Folklor Festival** has competitive character and also has three Festive days. Its organisation begins in February - 8 months before the big event.

3.Participants and performance

- In "**Malechevo sings and dances" Folklore Festival** participate folklore groups and individuals coming from different countries such as B ulgaria, FYROM, Greece, Serbia, Romania, Poland, Italy, Croatia, Indonesi a and even some African countries.
- Every year the number of participants is increasing and at the l ast edition in 2014 , there were over **2 000 singers and dancers** indeed.
- In the middle of the square of Mikrevo village to an open -air stage from 8:00 in the morning till 19:00 in the evening explodes an unbelievabl e magic of colorful dances, songs, rituals and exquisite folklore tradition s.

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4.Organizers of the festival

- **The main organizers of the International Folklore festival are** :
- Committee of the Festival - 12 persons
- Municipality administration – approx. 30 persons
- Community centers from every village in Strumyani Municipality
- Local schools – helping with English teachers
- Media partners – Bulgarian National Radio, Rodina TV and others
- Art Center Ilindenci in Ilindenci village where is organized an opening ceremony of the Festive days

5. Funding

- Basic funding of the Festival comes from donators and sponsors
- Partners of Strumyani Municipality
- There is no fee for participation in the Festival

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6. Audience and importance of the Festival

- "**Maleshevo sings and dances" Folklore Festival** has audience not only from the local people, but it attracts already tourists from the neighbor Municipalities of Sandanski, Kresna and Petrich towns.

- It became an **ID card of Strumyani Municipality** and more than 10 years already it proves the idea that the local Folklore and tradition s are still alive and that this is the right formula for preserving our intangible heritage and performing it as a tourist attraction.

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The role of the local Authorities to preserve the local heritage

- The local authorities have an important role to preserve and to popularize their tangible and intangible heritage!
- **Main obligations and challenges of the local authorities:**
- **1.** To discover unique artefacts, ruins, rituals, customs, music, songs and others exquisite heritage in their region .
- **2.** To keep this heritage for the next generations and to look for financial resources to preserve them.
- 3. To perform and popularize them through media, internet canals , events, festivals, tourist fairs, ethnographic exhibitions and s.o.

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- 4. To create suitable systems to educate people for preserving an d promoting these artefacts and traditional rituals.

- 5. To create beneficial solutions to educate children in Kindergardens, schools and Univercities to keep their local heritage.

- 6. To create sustainable contact between different touristic organizations /travel agency, touristic centers, touristic associations/ and the local authorities for performance of this tangible and intangible heri tage.

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The workshop "Citizens and governance – Towards networkingand active involvement of citizens" in Greece

The workshop "Citizens and governance –Towards networking and ctive involvement of citizens" took place in Agia, Greece – 24 – 26 March 2015 with a focus on the active involvement of the local communities in local heritage preservation and tourism development. The participants agreed on the importance on the development of sustainable forms of tourism for the preservation of the cultural and natural heritage of their respective local communities. tainable forms of tourism for the preservation of the cultural and natural heritage of their respective local communities. The workshop presentations and discussions focused on two important aspects of

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The workshop "Citizens and governance – Towards networkingand active involvement of citizens" in Greece

heritage preservation and its use for sustainable tourism development: the active involvement of local communities in the decision making process & Networking for Tourism - transnational cooperation offers the following possibilities for sustainable tourism development.

Thereafter, the partners agreed to implement the following actions: Identification and connection of the common natural and cultural heritage; Education; Research and development; Structure of the Network; Improving the tourism offer and visibility of Guest houses and hostels in the rural areas. The meeting brought together a total of 40 international participants who had the chance to meet and cooperate with over 100 local stakeholders and citizens.

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Active Citizenship and Touism

Active Citizenship in the EU

- **Civil dialogue**

- A democratic citizenship which implies that European institutions enjoy public confidence and can secure active involvement of citizens and organised civil society players in the decision-making processes at all levels, from local and national to European one;

- **Participation in elections**

- A democratic citizenship which guarantees that citizens have a say in the EU policy-shaping and decision-making processes by electing their representatives to the European Parliament.

- **Civil dialogue**

- **A democratic citizenship which implies that European institutions enjoy public confidence and can secure active involvement of citizens and organised civil society players in the decision-making processes at all levels, from local and national to European one;**

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Active Citizenship and Touism

- **Participation in local governance**

- A democratic citizenship which perforce must also operate at Member States' level, so that the structures for citizens' engagement are accessible and form part of every citizen's experience. While benefiting of their rights and taking their responsibilities, EU citizens should be fully involved in decision making processes on local level, through enhancing cooperation with local authorities as one of the main stakeholders of the EU

- **Social citizenship**

- A democratic citizenship that guarantees that all citizens can participate in the life of their communities and the shaping of public policies, including the most disadvantaged groups which are more than often the most remote from the European building process.

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Active Citizenship and Touism

What is the relationship between Active Citizenship and Tourism?

- Developing a competitive tourism offer depends on the cooperation and joint effort of all stakeholders, directly and indirectly involved with the tourism market.
- **The EU has identified key priorities and has developed policies and action plans intended to strengthen the EU tourism sector. The key priorities are:**

- **1. Increase tourism activity and productivity**
- **2. Create quality employment**
- **3. Stimulate a single market**
- **4. Improve international positioning**
- **5. Improve the coherence and recognition of the 'Spain' brand**
- **6. Encourage public-private co-responsibility**
- **7. Reduce the seasonality of tourism**
- **8. Promoting awareness, entrepreneurship and training**
- **9. Improving the offer**
- **10. Diversifying the demand**

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Active Citizenship and Touism

The importance of Public – Private cooperation for Tourism

- Civil society and the private sector are the main source of innovation and creativity
- Public authorities, being in charge of the decision- making processes and policy implementation can either boost economic activity through cooperation with the local stakeholders, or slow it down through inadequate policy making and implementation.

Civil society – Public authorities cooperation models

1. Local authorities supporting civil society initiatives

a) Mechanisms for encouraging innovation, creativity and ideas generation:

- Through specifically designed councils/clusters, composed of relevant stakeholders
- Through contests and calls for proposals

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Active Citizenship and Touism

2. Public – private partnerships

- a) PPPs encourage:
- CREATIVITY and IDEAS
- ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT and INITIATIVES
- MUTUAL TRUST between PUBLIC AUTHORITIES and CITIZENS
- RESPONSIBILITY and UNDERSTANDING
- ACCESS to INVESTMENTS and FUNDING

The Importance of Networking for Tourism

- Cross – marketing and common product development
- Joint branding and promotion of local heritage
- Increased visibility of local heritage through a larger network, branding, and cross-referencing
- Ongoing exchange of good practices and diversification of local tourism offer
- Decrease in marketing and promotion expenses.

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The Educational workshop and reenactment: "Turning traditional magical practices into tourist attractions"

The Educational workshop and reenactment: "Turning traditional magical practices into tourist attractions" was organized by Naxxar Local Council, Malta in the period 4rd – 6th June 2015. The main focus of the workshop was the interactive theoretical and practical training, targeted primarily at local authorities, the local communities and the performers. Through the concrete examples of traditional magical practices used for tourism purposes, presented by the partners a common ground was established on the necessary resources and tools for education and training of local citizens for the development of high-quality authentic tourist attractions based on traditions.

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The Educational workshop and reenactment: "Turning traditional magical practices into tourist attractions"

During the workshops and round tables, the experts from the different participating countries presented the most significant traditional celebrations from their localities, as well as the resources used for their organization and the role of the local authorities, the performers and the local citizens. The presentations were followed by discussions, aiming at exchanging experiences and suggestions from the experts for optimisation and internationalization of the traditional practices and celebrations. The workshops were followed by demonstrations of the traditional practices, which allowed the experts to work directly with the performers and citizens involved. The Educational workshop brought together 40 international participants and over 100 locals.

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Best practice examples:

CHARLEMAGNE AND EUROPEAN TALES AND LEGENDS CULTURAL ROUTE

- Currently the cultural route operates in 4 European countries - France, Belgium, Germany, and Luxembourg, covering over 40 municipalities and departments including Reims, Metz, Liege, Dinant, Asfeld, Cologne, Luxembourg, Aachen, Strasbourg. In its development and enrichment participate research teams from 11 European universities and research centers are involved.

Mouvement Européen
France
Marne

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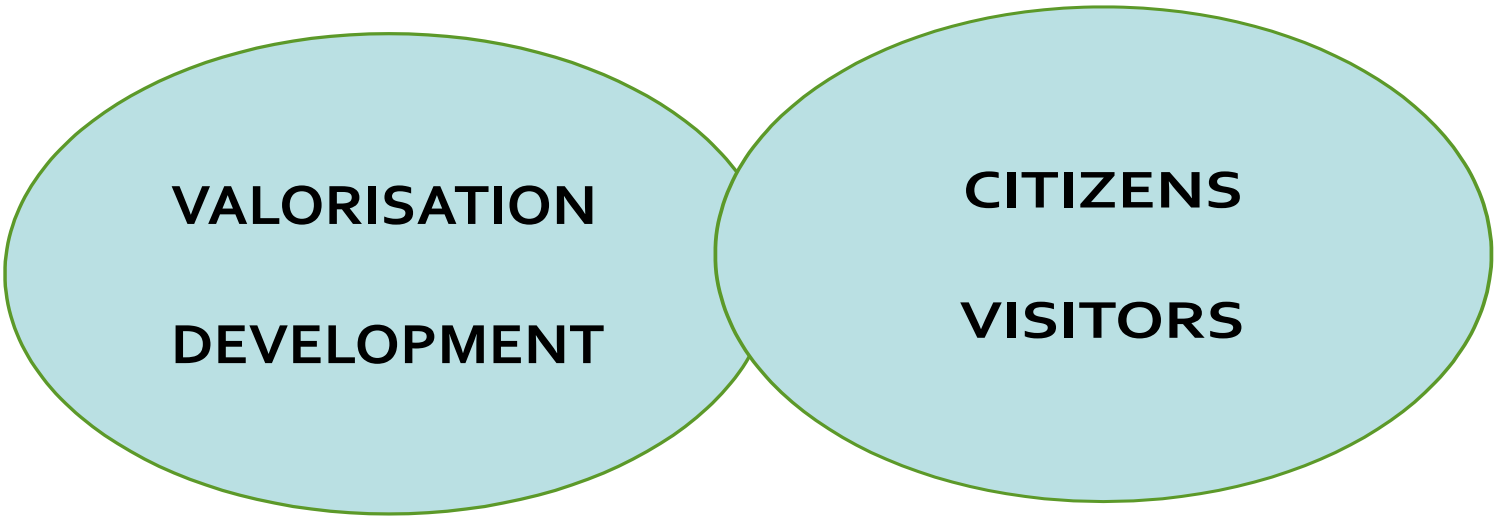
Best practice examples:

CHARLEMAGNE AND EUROPEAN TALES AND LEGENDS CULTURAL ROUTE

Sustainability of Charlemagne Route - WHAT TYPE OF OPTIMUM ?

WHY AND FOR WHOM?



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Best practice examples:

CHARLEMAGNE AND EUROPEAN TALES AND LEGENDS CULTURAL ROUTE

TYPES OF CHALLENGES

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Best practice examples:

CHARLEMAGNE AND EUROPEAN TALES AND LEGENDS CULTURAL ROUTE

A UNIFYING ROUTE

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Best practice examples:

CHARLEMAGNE AND EUROPEAN TALES AND LEGENDS CULTURAL ROUTE

WHAT ARE THE GOALS FOR TOURISM?

SUSTAINABILITY/ EMPLOYMENT/INCOME

- *TOURS*
- *SEDANTARY STAY*
- *ITINERANT STAY*
- *WHAT PRACTICES?*

ENTREPRISES : PROFITABILITY

PUBLIC SECTOR: CONSEQUENTIAL EFFECTS

THE UNESCO HERITAGE: A TOURISM ASSET

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Best practice examples:

CHARLEMAGNE AND EUROPEAN TALES AND LEGENDS CULTURAL ROUTE

« TEMPS BASKET»:A FONDAMENTAL INDICATOR

- Ressources (monuments , nature , events…)
- Accessibility
- Avarage « TEMPS BASKET » :

- 1 to 6 hours between 0 and 1 nights stay
- PARIS : 8 « BASKET » hours
- REIMS : 4 « BASKET » hours (without events
  "Imperial" Moroccan cities 18 basket hours?
-

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Best practice examples:

CHARLEMAGNE AND EUROPEAN TALES AND LEGENDS CULTURAL ROUTE

350 EUROS/day/TOURIST

175/200 EUROS

50 EUROS

Price elasticity scale Basic expenses

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Best practice examples:

CHARLEMAGNE AND EUROPEAN TALES AND LEGENDS CULTURAL ROUTE

Key essentials

tourism capacity of the territory

accessibility and accommodation capacity

attractions potential and «*temps basket*»

price elasticity scale

sustainable managment

territorial marketing

commercial marketing

labels : a plus!

networks : *« Route Charlemagne» (METZ)*

SATISFACTION INDICATORS

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Best practice examples:

CHARLEMAGNE AND EUROPEAN TALES AND LEGENDS CULTURAL ROUTE

CUSTOMERS SEGMENTS

- TRADITIONAL ?
- SENIORS
- JUNIORS
- GATEKEEPERS
- SOCIAL/FAMILY GROUPS
- CULTURAL GROUPS
- « ADVENTURERS »
- BUSINESS/CONGRES
- SLOW TOURISM

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Best practice examples:

CHARLEMAGNE AND EUROPEAN TALES AND LEGENDS CULTURAL ROUTE

TENDENCIES : DEMAND/DISTRIBUTION

- NATURE
- Hiking / Trekking (1%)
- Rural immersion (1%)
- CULTURE AND EXPERIENCES
- Shows/Big sites
- Industrial Tourism
- Large-scale events
- Workshops/Enogastronomy(1%)
- CRUISES(2%)
- NEORESORTS/WELLBEING (5%)
- SLOW TOURISM
- RESPONSIBLE TOURISM
- « VIVRE UNE EXPERIENCE »
- « AUTHENTICITY »

- DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS
- INTERNET (40/50%) *etourism*
- Booking desks
- Booking,Expedia,TripAdvisor
- PACKAGE OR SELFBUYING
- COUCH SURFING
- LOW COST/PREMIUM

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PROFESSIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

- IMPLEMENTATION STAFF
- BUSINESS MANAGERS
- BUSINESS EXECUTIVES
- PUBLIC SECTOR
- MEDIA

- TOUR OPERATORS
- CONSULTANTS
- ENGINEERS
- HOTELIERS /RESTAURATEURS
- TOURISM OFFICES
- CULTURAL SITES

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Best practice examples:

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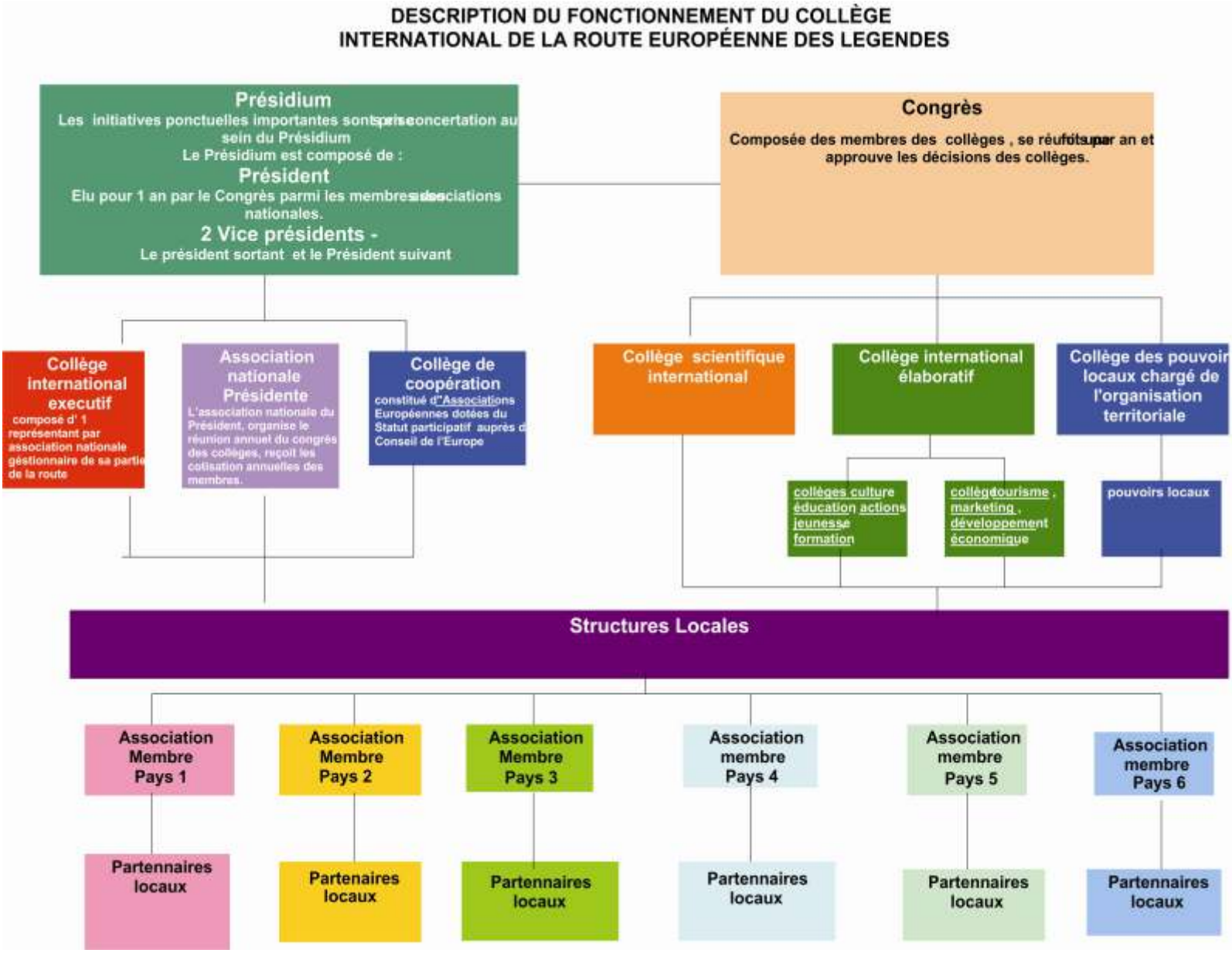

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Best practice examples:

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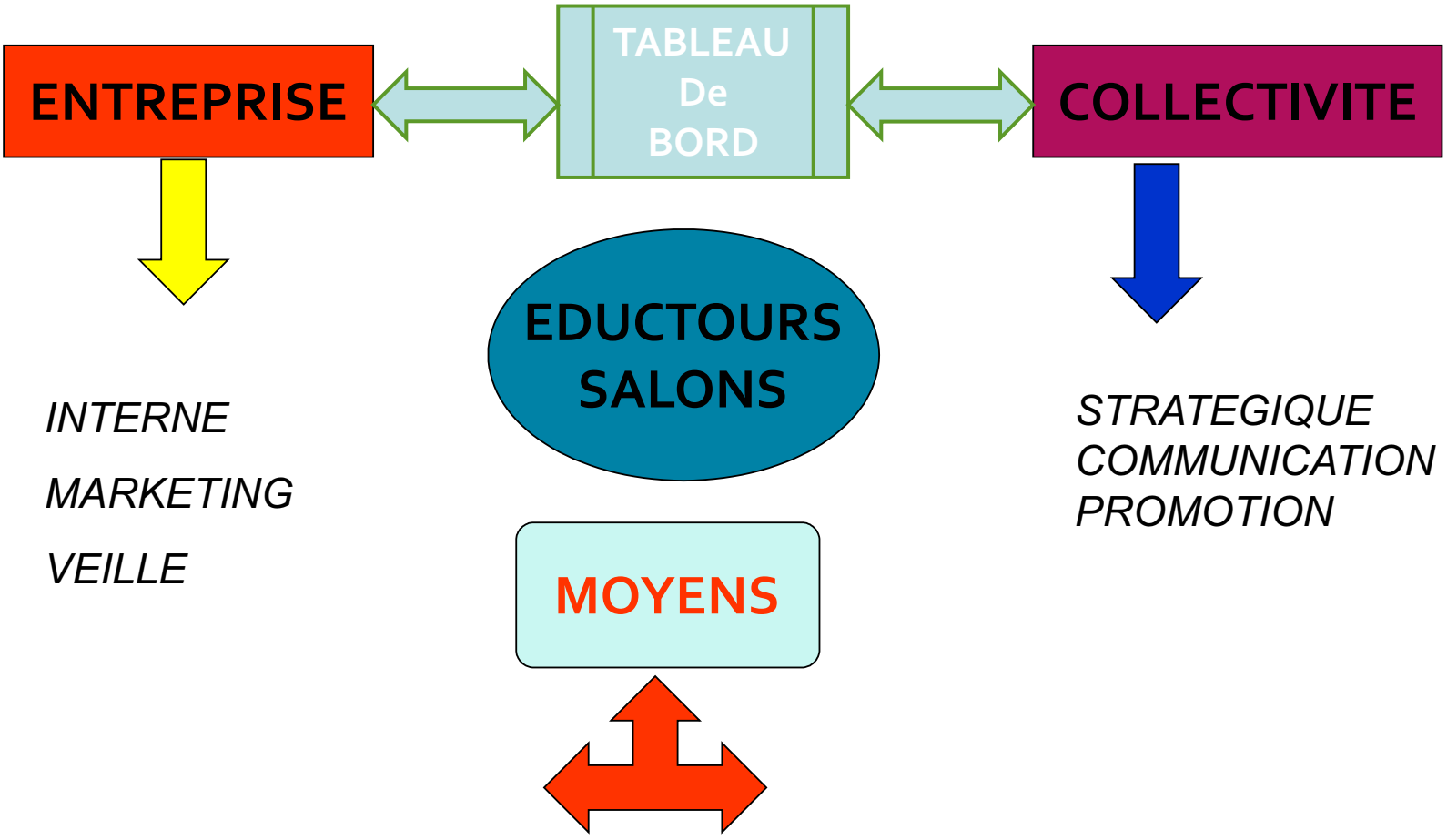
ACTION PLAN OR « MISE EN TOURISME »



FINANCIERS + TECHNIQUES+ HUMAINS

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Best practice examples:

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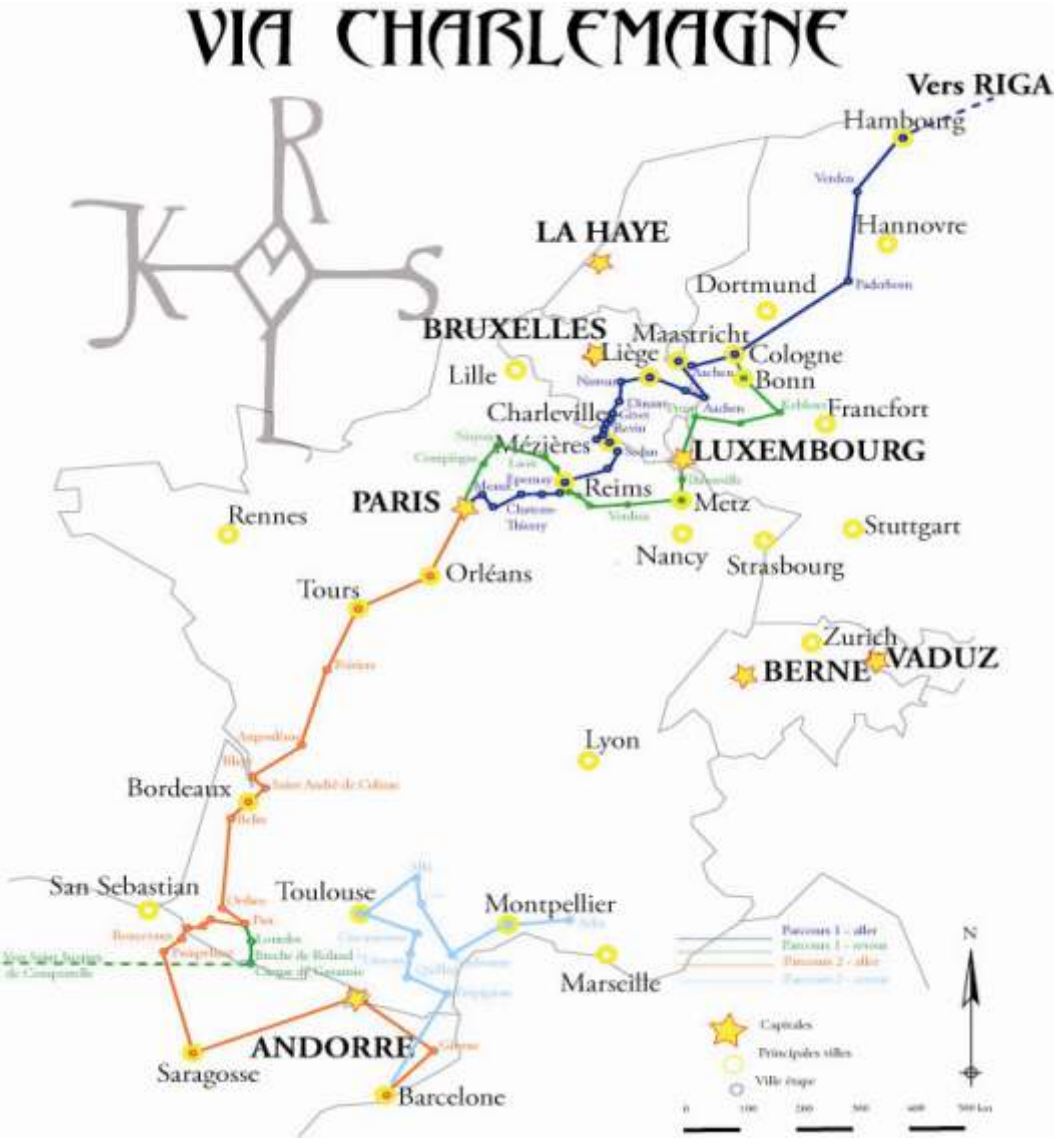
A project built around

4 major pillars:

- **Tourism**
- **Culture**
- **Professional training**
- **Education**



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Best practice examples:

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Tourism

- **A marketing strategy for the promotion of the cultural-historical heritage and natural resources in the affiliated territories**
- **Development of tourist packages for different age groups:**
  - **for children and students**
  - **for youth**
  - **for adults**
- **Development of tourism packages, depending on the duration of the visit:**
  - **within the territory of the municipality**
  - **connecting more municipalities**
  - **cross-border routes**

Development of tourism packages depending on the type of tourism:

- **Creative tourism**
- **Educational tourism**
- **Gastronomical tourism**
- **Religious/spiritual tourism**
- **Wellness and spa tourism**
- **Rural tourism**
- **Eco tourism**

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Best practice examples:

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Tourism

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Best practice examples:

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Culture

Promoting cultural awareness and local cultural productions through:

- **Thematic Cultural Events**
- **Thematic cultural productions**
- **Festivals**

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Best practice examples:

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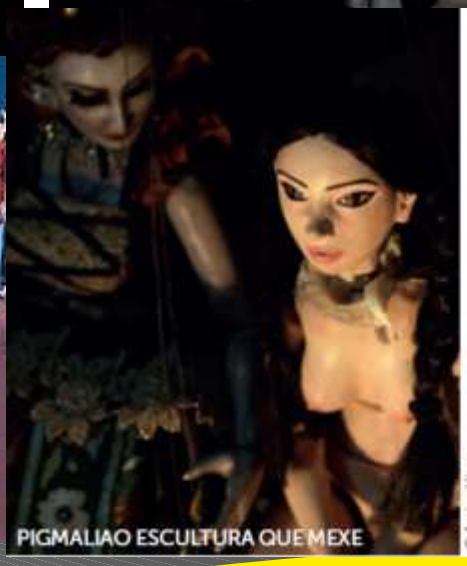

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Best practice examples:

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Professional training

- Professional training implemented by the Association of the French Educational institutions and University of Reims, Cultural organizations and NGOs for the following disciplines:
- Cultural tourism managers
- Tourist guides
- Guides – storytellers

The training' s being developed in German and French, in order to train specialists for the cross-border regions.

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Best practice examples:

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Education

- The educational institutions are a major target group for the cultural route. Currently the educational activities provided are:

- **History and cultural awareness interactive courses**
- **French and German Language courses**
- **Youth Exchanges facilitated mainly by the International office for French – German cooperation**
- **French – German summer camps**

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Best practice examples:

CHARLEMAGNE AND EUROPEAN TALES AND LEGENDS CULTURAL ROUTE

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL WAS OFFICIALLY ESTABLISHED

9 JUNE 2015 – Luxembourg Palace

VIA CHARLEMAGNE IS OFFICIALLY UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT - MR. MARTIN SCHULZ SINCE 28 JANUARY 2015

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Building Strong Destination Image Workshop in Strumyani

The Municipality if Strumyani, Bulgaria hosted the Workshop on building strong destination image, differentiating the tourism offer and building a unique "brand" of the Network – magical practices in tourism offer, which took place in the period 20-22 July 2015. The official opening of the event was followed by a round table "Building strong destination image –best practices in Europe", where the special guest of the event, Mr Noel Orsat presented the best practice: Route Charlemagne and European Tales and Legends Route – a European initiative the Municipality of Strumyani is working to become part of. The involvement of Strumyani was presented by the leader of Association Euni Partners' research

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Building Strong Destination Image Workshop in Strumyani

the professor in archaeology and cultural tourism prof. Vasil Markov. The partners' best practices were also presented and discussed and were followed by best practice examples from Turkey and Kyrgyzstan, presented by special guests from the respective countries. The last day was devoted to practical demonstrations, reenactments and a debate on the future of the Network, which lead to the agreement of practical steps and measures for Network sustainability and expansion after the project lifetime. The event involved 46 international participants from Greece, Italy, Spain, Malta, France, Turkey and Kyrgyzstan and over 150 locals.

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Building strong destination image: Municipality of Strumyani

- Research findings
- Strategy built
- Short-term strategy
- Long-term strategy

Anthropological field study of the cultural heritage in Strumyani Municipality 2013

Major findings

- Palat peak
- The Black Rock

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Building strong destination image: Municipality of Strumyani

Palat Peak

- Ancient Thracian sanctuary

- The Water rock -a large megalithic Thracian altar

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Building strong destination image: Municipality of Strumyani

Legends related to the sanctuary

Local celebrations and magical practices - Ascension day

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Building strong destination image: Municipality of Strumyani

The Black Rock

- A sacralized area, containing:
- A rock platform - altar, or monumental throne
- A small fortress from IV - V c. AD
- a rock carved tomb

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Building strong destination image: Municipality of Strumyani

Zandanite (the dungeons)

The Dungeons

An ancient sanctuary, used by local people to "imprison" criminals within

The Healing Spring

Rituals and magical practices performed here are believed to heal and enlighten

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Building strong destination image: Municipality of Strumyani

Municipality of Strumyani in the European Tales and Legends route

1. Ancient heritage:

- the preserved material monuments, cult practices and artifacts are alive today
- interweaving of mythology, traditions and legends in folklore customs and religious rituals

- 2. Promotion of the unique folklore festive tradition of Palat village: Easter; Ascension day
- involvement of the artistic associations and clubs in Strumyani Municipality in reenactments:
- Interactive tourist attractions based on the customs: traditional games, cuisine, magical practices

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Building strong destination image: Municipality of Strumyani

Easter in Palat village

- Painting of Easter eggs
- Reenactments
- Traditional games
- Songs and dances
- Religious rituals interwoven with pagan traditions

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Building strong destination image: Municipality of Strumyani

Conditions for development of tourist attractions based on intangible heritage

- Training of tourist guides
- Integration of elements of
- the traditional rituals and games into a tourist product, available within the appropriate for their performance season
- Socialization of the ancient sanctuaries

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Building strong destination image: Municipality of Strumyani

Municipality of Strumyani in the European Tales and Legends route

3. Festivals and celebrations:

- Maleshevo Sings and Dances International Festival
- Festival of the Gods of Wine

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The Rural Tourism and Entrepreneurship Forum in Burgos

The Rural Tourism and Entrepreneurship Forum, where the importance of inter-generational learning, the preservation of the intangible heritage and its implications for rural tourism and entrepreneurship took place in Lerma (Burgos), Spain between 18th and 20th September 2015. 40 international and over a hundred local participants came together. During the event, different examples and approaches for fostering entrepreneurship were discussed, while the host demonstrated examples of successful entrepreneurial projects, whose developers shared their experience and practical

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Building Strong Destination Image Workshop in Strumyani

advice. Afterwards, the project results, the network and the agreed strategies and measures for sustainability and expansion were presented and discussed among project participants and local citizens. Thereafter, the future development of the network was discussed, as well as the opportunities and challenges before it. To conclude the transnational event, the President of the Provincial Government of Burgos and the President of the Board of Directors of SODEBUR exchanged several ideas and conclusions of relevant matters discussed during these days with two representatives of each partner entity.

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AUTHENTIC EUROPE NETWORK

Authentic Europe Network Structure and Regulation

Background and Objectives

The Authentic Europe Network has been established within the framework of the "Authentic Europe" project, co-funded by the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Union, Strand 2 Democratic engagement and civic participation: Encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level. Measure: Networks of Towns.

The project's main objective is to create a sustainable Network of small municipalities with little experience at European level in order to facilitate international cooperation and exchange of good practices among them in the field of rural tourism. More specifically the project aims are:

- to encourage a fuller exploitation of the existing natural and cultural resources in the rural areas, encompassing folk arts (music, dance, and rituals), ethnography, customs, traditional food and beverage, handicrafts, natural healing practices etc.;
- to introduce tools and methods for effective networking to stakeholders;
- to promote sustainability, competitiveness and respect of local identities; to reinforce the sense of European citizenship by strengthening the relations between European local communities.

The target groups are: public authorities, citizens; youth; seniors; small and medium businesses; cultural and tourism organizations from the participating regions.

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Authentic Europe Network
Structure and Regulation

Ethos

The Network will be non-party in politics and non-sectarian in religion and will be fully committed to a policy of equal opportunity to all irrespective of gender, class, creed, disability or ethnic background.

Membership:

The Network is comprised by its founding members and partners in the Authentic Europe project:

- Municipality of Strumyani, Bulgaria
- Municipality of Agia, Greece
- SODEBUR, Spain
- ANCI Sardegna, Italy
- Naxxar Local Council, Malta.

The Network membership is free of charge.
The accession of new members is discussed and approved by the founding members after the new candidates express their interest for joining the Network in written through the Network website, or through the contact persons appointed by each founding member.

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Authentic Europe Network Structure and Regulation

The membership in the Network is open to local and regional authorities with predominantly rural territories, interested in developing their territories as tourist destinations, and willing to abide the regulations and obligations listed in this document.

Rights and obligations of the Network members:

The network members have agreed upon the following obligations:

- To promote the Network in national and international events, forums, fairs, etc.;
- To work towards the achievement of the Network objectives and contribute to the development of the Network and its members;
- To continue to actively engage the local communities into the development of the Authentic Europe policies, actions and services;
- To contribute to the development of the Authentic Europe Network through fundraising activities, development and implementation of projects and programs of common interest;
- To participate in the annual meeting of the Network via personal attendance of a representative or through electron means, such as skype;
- To inform the rest of the partners of any changes in the legal circumstances if the institution/ organization they represent;
- To provide access to information and materials related to the Authentic Europe Network to citizens, stakeholders and other interested parties;

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Authentic Europe Network
Structure and Regulation

The Authentic Europe Network members have the right to use and reuse the common policies, strategies and material developed by the Network in their local/ regional context, as long as the Authentic Europe Network name is mentioned and the Network's contribution acknowledged;
- To promote the other members' rural tourist sites and attractions as part of the Network;
- To engage with other Network members in additional activities for extending the collaboration among different stakeholders in the Network through:
- Business partnerships
- Joint rural tourism products, initiatives, campaigns
- Joint promotional initiatives
- Joint projects in the fields of education, tourism, culture, active ageing, citizenship or other fields or topics of common interest

The final goal of this Network is:

To create a stable network of local communities aiming at fostering communication, mutual understanding, development of European values and identities, providing for the common development of rural tourism policies and services and thus bringing the European communities closer.
The participation in the network shall be in a spirit of cooperation, friendship and common sharing of experiences and objectives, supporting the wellbeing of the European citizens.

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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.