

TOURage 2nd Annual Conference in Burgas

“Cooperation and collaboration between stakeholders, local institutions and entrepreneurs are one of the core methods to develop senior tourism successfully in regions”

– TOURage Annual conference in Burgas

Project “TOURage – Developing Senior Tourism in Remote Regions” organized its 2nd Annual Conference on May 21st, hosted by the Regional Governor of Burgas, in Bulgaria. All the tourism stakeholders and experts taking part in the conference were greeted by the Bulgarian Deputy Minister of Economy, Energy and Tourism and the Governor of Burgas District and Deputy Mayor of Burgas Municipality. The officials emphasized the importance of experience exchange, combination of tourism services to make offers rich, pointing out the importance of good infrastructure and transport system to develop tourism successfully. The conference concluded with an idea that cooperation and collaboration between stakeholders, local institutions and entrepreneurs are one of the core methods to develop successfully senior tourism in regions.

This time the TOURage Annual Conference discussed product development and marketing for senior tourism. Presentations held in parallel thematic sessions highlighted a need for cooperation between institutions. Seniors should be involved when developing senior tourism and research about this target group should be done to ensure appropriate and workable Tourism offers.



Sonya Enilova, Opening speech



Annual Conference in Burgas, Bulgaria

Find the summary of the conference [here](#)



Study visits in Bulgaria and Greece

Burgas, Bulgaria

At the end of May 2013 partners of TOURage project met in Burgas for the 2nd Annual Conference and study visit. The study visit was focusing on good practices located in the Burgas region. Several places were visited and evaluated by all the partners of the Project.

Read more about the study visit [here](#).



Brashlian village in Strandza Natural Park, Bulgaria

Komotini, Greece

At end of June 2013 all partners of the Project were greeted in Komotini where they were introduced to the good practices of senior tourism in Greece. During the study visit partners visited Evros Delta, City of Xanthi where presentations about therapeutic Mud Baths in Krinides and the women cooperative of Kokkinogia, as well as old town festival were held.

Read more about the study visit [here](#).



Evros Delta in Traianoupolis, Greece



Planned activities in the next Project period

During the fourth project period, TOURage partners will organize project meetings and take part in two study visits. The first study visit takes place in **Pomorskie** and **Warmia-Mazury** regions, which are situated in Northern Poland by the Baltic Sea. The regions are known for their well-preserved nature and have rich cultural heritage. At the end of the year 2013, the project partners will travel to **Prešov** to North-Eastern Slovakia for the second study visit and project meetings. The

region with its diverse landscapes has many opportunities for senior travellers. In addition to these activities, the partners will focus on compiling implementation plans to ensure that the project results will be utilized also after the project has ended. Also the final results of the senior tourism survey will be revealed and disseminated during the fourth period. The results gained can help the regions to develop their tourism products for senior tourists.



Senior Tourism and Geographical Characteristics

Research paper by Prof. Vasil Marinov, Assoc. Prof. Mariana Assenova, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Tourism Department (Bulgaria)



Brashlian village in Strandza Natural Park, Bulgaria

Although there is no common understanding on the lower age limit of the group of citizens accepted as senior citizens, when it comes to their involvement in travel and tourism the segment of 55 years old and over is considered. Data shows that about 25% of the European population falls in the appointed group. Marketers are interested in this group because in their opinion its share in travel is growing worldwide. For that reason many tour operators and other tourist organization put much effort in researching their motivation and travel behavior in order to develop and

adapt their offers to the demand of senior tourists. The group of senior travelers is not homogeneous. A number of segments of senior travelers are identified. In terms of age structure the senior market comprises young, middle and older seniors, and based on motivation some researchers identify Nostalgics, Friendlies, Learners, Escapists, Thinkers, Status-Seekers, and Physicals.

Most often the argument for the special attention to be paid to the senior tourist market is the fact that this population group represents significant economic market potential. It includes individuals with both purchasing power and leisure time. Other characteristics outlined include their travel experience, the demand for quality services, but the health issues as well and special care required.

The above mentioned characteristics are generally valid for the post-war generation in Western Europe, as well as for USA, Canada, Australia, etc., but they can hardly be attributed to the senior population in Central and Eastern Europe. Here most often seniors have neither the financial power, nor the time to undertake tourist trips, because they continue to work and earn for their living. The raising of retirement age could also be considered as a limiting factor.

Read more [here](#)



TOURage was presented in the international social tourism event in Brussels

By Lead Partner of TOURage project, Ulla Aänismaa (Finland)

TOURage project was presented in the Calypso launching event in Brussels on 12th June 2013. The launching event took place in Bozar, the Centre of Fine Arts, and it gathered regional, national and EU level stakeholders and actors involved in social tourism to the same setting. It offered an extensive platform to disseminate the project's aims, results and activities to a wider European public.

Social tourism is focusing on four target groups and apart from youth, disabled and families, seniors are one of them. The TOURage project represented a good example on the interregional initiative regarding the senior tourism and rural economic development. In the event key stakeholders from the European Commission, international and national organizations and associations such as International Social Tourism Organization (ISTO-OITS) and Segittur were present. Event increased the synergies and networking between different levels of actors from all around the Europe.

Opening speeches were given by the President of the ISTO-OITS Mr. Jean Marc Mignon and the Director of DG Enterprise and Industry Mr. Peter

Ortún. Yves Godin, Secretary General of the ISTO-OITS, concluded the event. They all highlighted both the importance of enhancing off-season tourism to secure the sustainability of the tourism industry and the social aspect of the tourism. They emphasized that eCalypso platform is a new important tool for enhancing that. In addition to the TOURage project, two other project examples were presented - Tourism Link and Erzsébet. Synergies can be established between these projects in the future.

More information can be found on www.ecalypso.eu



The eCalypso Platform is a reality

By Danny Silva, eCalypso Project Manager

The International Social Tourism Organization (ISTO), together with a consortium of six organizations, has been mandated by the European Commission to develop a web platform, www.ecalypso.eu, linking demand and supply in the field of social tourism to stimulate travelling across European countries.

Ecalypso.eu offers a B2B service which sells specially designed offers and packages aimed at specific target group associations or specialist

operators. Through the eCalypso platform, a service provider or Social Tourism Professionals can strike accords with hotels, restaurants and other tourism professionals in order to construct a full package offer. In turn this package can be placed onto the eCalypso platform and bought directly from the Platform (transaction directly between the service provider and buyer; the eCalypso platform is an intermediary simplifying and liaising the 2 parties) by member organizations, institutions, groups, operators and other tourism professionals specifically related to Social Tourism.

Read more about eCalypso [here](#)



West Region of Ireland

- Majority of overseas visitors are over 55.
- Of those travelling from Britain 53% are over 55.
- Of those travelling from North America 48% are over 55.
- Of those coming to the West Region from mainland Europe one-third are over 55.
- Voluntary Bodies at national, regional & local level actively support the concept of tourism breaks for older people.
- Hotels & Guesthouses offer special mid-week deals outside peak season to the older generation.



The tourism sector is a key part of the economy of the West Region. This fact is emphasized in the West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 where it is anticipated that the tourist sector and its supporting agencies should develop the potential of the key strengths of the unique tourist product available in the region. The strategic role of Galway City is recognized in the development of the regional tourism economy. **Galway City** is also the capital of Connacht, and the third largest city in the Republic of Ireland after Dublin and Cork. **Tourism** is of major importance to the City which had 2.1 million visitors during its peak and produced revenue of well over €400 million. All other towns throughout the region play an important role in developing tourism through their attractive settings and wealth of cultural and natural heritage.

The West Regional Authority has links with tourism organizations and has supported the whole concept of Third-Age Tourism or what is termed in Ireland as the "Grey Market". The Authority also has links with a number of organizations which lobby for the rights of older people in Ireland. They campaign to raise awareness of the issues affecting older people and influence government policy. They include: Older & Bolder, Older Women's Network, and Irish Senior Citizens Parliament.

However, from the point of view of third age tourism the most important body is "**Active Retirement Ireland.**" Active Retirement Ireland (ARI) is a national network of over 480 local Active Retirement Associations with 23,000 members. ARI believes that older people have the right to be full and participative members of the society. ARI combats ageism through the reality and everyday work of the self-organised local associations and the regional councils. ARI has a large voluntary base with local, regional and national voluntary committees. Activities of the national organisation include networking days, information seminars and health promotion events. Each local association is run by a local voluntary committee who plan and deliver a range of social, cultural, learning and physical activities based on what their members would like to do and their ability to participate. These activities include social networking through tea dances and evenings out; holidays and short breaks; physical activities such as swimming, bowls and walking; learning activities include IT, intergenerational projects, art and crafts. All the activities are aimed at keeping older people active and well. Active Retirement Associations are a lifeline for many older people who would otherwise feel isolated and lonely.

Tourism Organisations and Companies are now positioning themselves to take advantage of new possibilities in the "Grey Market". The Irish Government recently announced that "it is going after the grey euro by wooing pensioners to come on holiday to Ireland with an offer of cut-price rail travel." It wants the elderly "have time, will travel" brigade to make their way over in a bid to bolster tourism numbers." And with 80 million senior citizens in Europe to draw from, the scheme has been given a warm welcome by the tourism industry which says pensioners are an ideal target market especially the UK (our nearest neighbor) as in the UK alone, there is a market of nine million over-66s who have the time, discretionary income and inclination to travel. In fact the new scheme would offer senior citizens visiting Ireland from abroad vouchers for "greatly discounted" travel on trains while in Ireland.

More about the region: www.galway.ie



Age friendly Business Recognition Scheme Ireland

The Age Friendly Business Recognition Scheme is an initiative that has been launched under the Age Friendly Counties Programme. The Age Friendly Business Recognition Scheme encourages businesses to improve the customer experience for older people. The scheme, by the Ageing Well Network, will encourage businesses to tap into the sizeable over 60s market by improving the customer experience for older people and increase revenue for businesses. This recognition allows customers to identify Age Friendly businesses and publicises those businesses locally and nationally to older consumers. Each business that signs up to become a member, gets connected to others in the Age-Friendly Business Network and is provided with a Tool Kit and support on how to give better service to older customers and in turn, increase business.

The Age Friendly Business Recognition Scheme is a growing brand, supported by Chambers Ireland, The Age Friendly Counties Programme, Age and Opportunity and the Netwell Centre.

By advertising as an Age Friendly business, businesses are letting older people know that they value their custom and they are committed to serving them.

Read more [here](#)

TOURage
Every age is tour age



Active Retirement Ireland

REGIONAL EVENTS

Active Retirement Ireland's 3rd Trade and Tourism Show, Whites of Wexford, April 9th & 10th, 2013

Over 100 companies from the Trade, Tourism, Retail, Health promotion and NGO sectors took stands at the **3rd Trade and Tourism Show** held by Active Retirement Ireland (ARI) on 9th of April 2013 in Wexford. The event was very successful with around 2000 people in attendance. As well as the huge variety of stands, workshops were organized for people to get a flavor of the different activities on offer. The ever popular Supervalu Cookery Demonstration by Kevin Dundon was a treat for attendees. The Ros Tapestry Workshops were booked out as people queued to learn how to embroider. The Raised Garden Workshop was very successful, as was the workshop delivered by Birdwatch Ireland.

A fashion show was held during the Event, organized courtesy of Shaws Department Stores. The clothes were modeled by members of the Active Retirement of Ireland.



Podkarpackie Region

TOURage presented to people related to the senior tourism

"Seniors - foreigners staying in 2012 Podkarpackie region usually carry recreation trips that last about 8-10 days (32%). Most trips are also weekly (25%) and longer lasting 2-3 weeks (24%). One in ten respondents reported very long trips, lasting one month or more." - This is one of the conclusions of the research study, realized by team led by Dr. Krzysztof Szpara of Rzeszow University of Information Technology and Management. The initial presentation of the results of these studies took place at the regional workshop held in Marshal's Office of Podkarpackie Region on March 15, 2013.

The general aim of the workshop was to familiarize people primarily related to the senior tourism sector and the representatives of the universities of the third century with the current progress of the TOURage project. Project coordinator, Jarosław Reczek, presented the project, its partners, as well as good practices in the Podkarpackie region and selected good practices in the partner regions. [Read more here](#)

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Regional Council of North Karelia



TOURage discussed cross-border cooperation in North Karelia

On 22nd February 2013 TOURage project was presented to the partners of *Contemporary Old City - Enhancing cultural tourism across the border* project financed by the Karelia ENPI CPC Programme and led by the City of Joensuu (North Karelia). The project aims to promote historical and cultural centers and activities in Petrozavodsk and in the city of Joensuu. The project consortium consisting of 4 organisations from North Karelia and 5 from the Republic of Karelia inventories the regions' cultural and historical offers and creates a joint marketing plan for the regions. Also a platform for the information related to cultural and historical sites will be formed. [Read more here](#)



Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic

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Local stakeholders from Pomorskie and Warmia – Mazury regions discuss senior tourism development possibilities

On 21st March 2013 in Elbląg the Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic held a thematic seminar for representatives of local authorities, senior citizens associations, academia and tourism industry entitled “Seniors in tourism – a desirable target group or unwanted customers”. The seminar started with the opening words by Ms Małgorzata Samusjew, Association’s Programmes Manager. Ms Samusjew talked about current activities within the TOURage project with the aim of facilitating regional development policies in the area of senior tourism by exchanging good practices offered by the project partners. A detailed presentation of the TOURage project good practices was delivered by Mr Sebastian Magier, Project Specialist at the Association.

Read more [here](#)



Lake Balaton Region

TOURage

Every age is tour age

Senior tourism discussed in the context of regional policy planning in Warmia-Mazury

Between 5th and 6th June 2013 in Kadyny the Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic organised a two-day workshop for regional stakeholders focusing on senior tourism in the context of regional policy planning.

The workshop resulted from a direct co-operation of the Association with the Warmia-Mazury Regional Centre for Social Policy in Olsztyn and the FOSA Federation of Social Organisations, which are now in the process of drafting a new Regional Programme for Seniors 2014-2020. The Programme is being drafted by a special task force consisting of regional politicians and civil servants, as well as representatives of senior citizen organisations, NGOs, academia and law enforcement agencies. The Association is also directly represented in the task force to actively engage the regional authorities in discussions on the importance of senior tourism and promote the TOURage project and its good practices among regional stakeholders. Read more [here](#)

active ageing

CROSSING BORDERS

TOURage

Every age is tour age

Promoting senior tourism and active ageing is a very important priority in the Lake Balaton Region. Led by this purpose, the Lake Balaton Development Coordination Agency launched an other project as well in this field besides the TOURage project. The project “Active Ageing”, financed by the Austria-Hungary IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013, started in January 2013 and will end in December 2014. The project is implemented by the cooperation of 6 organisations from the territory of the micro-region of Schneebergland in Austria and the micro-region of Keszthely in Hungary.

What is common in these areas is that both of them are rural tourism destinations, which are facing similar demographic changes: ageing population and migration of youth. The changed family structures, the new lifestyles and the decreasing budget of settlements require new, different measures to strengthen solidarity between seniors and youth. This cross border project aims to tackle these issues by the cooperation of the partners, which is beneficial for both parties.

In order to promote active ageing in the Lake Balaton region, the task of the Lake Balaton Development Coordination Agency is to implement pilot-actions and elaborate micro-regional concepts with the involvement of regional decision-makers and competent institutions. The pilot actions and concepts are project-specific, but it will be easily adopted to other regions as well both in Hungary and Austria.

Dieses Projekt wird im Rahmen des Programms zur grenzüberschreitenden Kooperation Österreich-Ungarn 2007-2013 durch den Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung, das Seniorenreferat des Landes Niederösterreich und Ungarn gefördert.

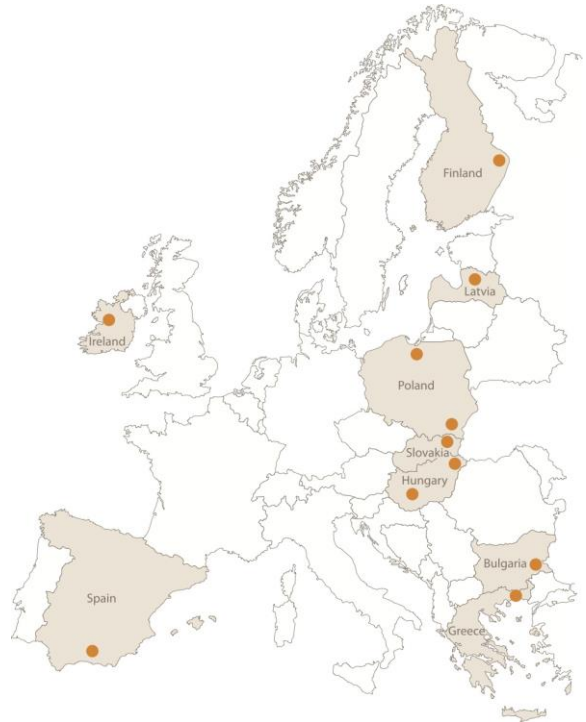
Ezt a projektet az AUSTRIA-MAGYARORSZÁG 2007-2013 határon átnyúló együttműködési programban az Európai Regionális Fejlesztési Alap, az Alsó-Ausztriai Tartomány Szeniorögyköre és Magyarország támogatják.



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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- ❖ **SEPTEMBER 2013: Study visit in Warmia-Mazury Region (Poland)**
- ❖ **NOVEMBER 2013: Study visit in Presov (Slovakia)**

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