Policy Report 2

SPOT Policy Briefs # 7-29

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Purpose and scope of the deliverable

This document is created as deliverable D5.6 Policy Report 2 and it follows on from the previous deliverable D5.5 Policy Report 1, in which Policy Briefs 1 – 6 are listed. This deliverable contains a series of Policy Briefs that present the main findings and practical outcomes of the EU-funded research project SPOT (for the years 2020-2022). The document aims to inform all stakeholder groups involved in the development of cultural tourism in Europe about what was implemented during the transnational study (in which 15 countries of the world are involved) in the SPOT project. At the same time, several policy-related recommendations are shared. The individual Policy Briefs include other results that could be useful in the stakeholder profession.

Document history

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0.0	*30 -Sept- 2022*	*Template Policy Report 2 / Policy Brief designed*
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1. SPOT Policy Briefs # 7-29

This chapter contains the individual Policy Briefs that were created following the research in the individual Workpackages of the SPOT project. It means Workpackage 1: Documentation and Data Collection; Workpackage 2: Policies, strategies and practices and Workpackage 3: Creation of an Innovation Tool (SPOT-IT). The chapter also consists from particular Policy Briefs prepared by all SPOT teams based on their Case Study areas.

Figure 1. The SPOT Policy Briefs # 7-29 collage

CZECHIA

PolicyBRIEF

SPOT

SOCIAL AND INNOVATIVE PLATFORM
ON CULTURAL TOURISM
AND ITS POTENTIAL TOWARDS
DEEPENING EUROPEANISATION

www.SPOTprojectH2020.eu

June 2022 | SPOT Policy Brief #7

South Moravian Region

To public administration bodies at the level of the South Moravian Region

Authors: the team of the Department of Applied and Landscape Ecology, Faculty of AgriSciences, Mendel University in Brno

Introduction

The **South Moravian region**, together with the regions of South Bohemia, Královéhradecký and Karlovy Vary, is among the regions of the Czech Republic that receive the most tourists, after Prague. Unlike other regions (along with southern Bohemia), it has a very diversified spectrum of attractions such as natural beauties, represented by a national park, three protected landscape areas and other attractions. Traditional folklore associated with wine culture is a huge competitive advantage. There are also tangible and intangible UNESCO cultural heritage monuments. On the other hand, there are many other monuments in the South Moravian region, which are well-known, less well-known or waiting to be discovered by the general public - whether it is a church or noble buildings, folk architecture, technical monuments and so. Brno is an important conference centre in Europe.

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1. Evidence and Analysis

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has been subdued but is still ongoing, has turned the attention of Czech tourists to **domestic destinations**. While destinations aimed at foreign visitors (Prague, UNESCO monuments, spas in the Karlovy Vary region) lost significantly, domestic, especially rural destinations experienced only a slight decrease in attendance, and in some places also an increase. Even though international tourism is starting to recover, **certain barriers remain** - the collapse of air transport, the energy crisis, but also Russia's aggression towards Ukraine - which reduce the comfort, safety and economic accessibility of tourism to distant destinations. On the other hand, it is possible that a number of domestic tourists who discovered the beauties of the Czech Republic during the pandemic restrictions are open to the idea of spending more of their free time in the country.

Number of visitors during the pre-covid year 2019

Year 2021

Source: *CzechTourism*

> **It would be advisable to capture and evolve this trend. The South Moravian region could focus on supporting cultural tourism with a focus on rural tourism, which does not mean suppressing other forms of tourism, as tourists usually require different attractions in one destination.**

South Moravian Region: Development of the intensity of tourism 2012 - 2020. Number of overnight stays in mass accommodation facilities relative to the number of inhabitants
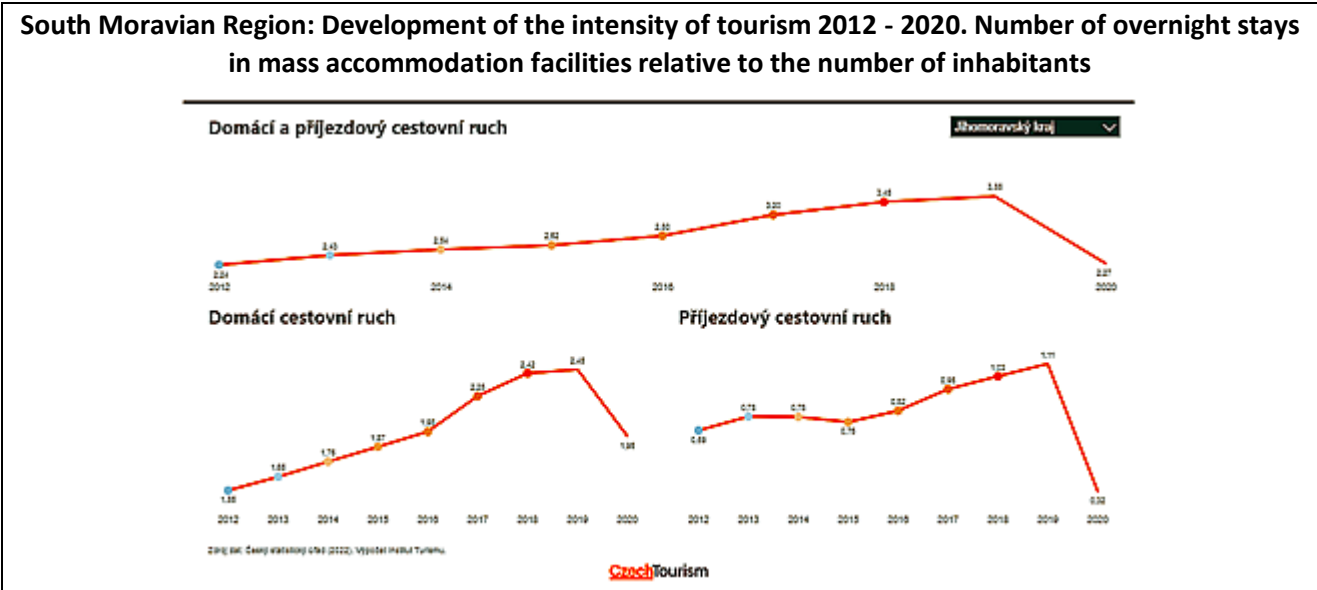
2. Policy Implications and Recommendations

Why support rural cultural tourism in the South Moravian Region? Above all, this corresponds to the characteristics of the region, which, except of Brno, is rural and does not have attractive mountains, like other localities. Cultural tourism is less dependent on seasonality than other forms of tourism. Cultural tourism expands the knowledge and cultural outlook of visitors and local residents and supports the transition of the South Moravian countryside to the post-productive era. The highest degree of industrialization of the Czech countryside within the EU ceases to be a sign of progress and becomes a sign of backwardness. In most peripheral micro-regions, for example in the Vranov area or Horňácko, the development of cultural tourism can contribute to reducing unemployment. Most tourism establishments are small and medium-sized enterprises that can quickly adapt to changing conditions.

Fig. 1 Modern wine cellars in Velké Pavlovice. Photo by A. Vaishar

What prevents it? The significant development of rural tourism requires the improvement of the technical and social infrastructure, which so far is only designed to meet the needs of local residents. The human factor is also problematic. There are real concerns that the workforce that has left the travel industry during the pandemic has already established itself in other fields that are better paid, more stable and have better conditions and more favourable working hours. A significant problem which can also be considered is the lack of cooperation in destinations, where individual providers, sometimes including public administration, consider themselves competitors and insufficiently cooperate in promoting the destination as such.

What to do about it? In contrast to manufacturing industries, tourism facilities themselves do not require direct subsidies. Such subsidies can even be counterproductive, as the set conditions usually make it impossible for entrepreneurs to quickly adapt to the changing situation. We propose to focus on three areas of routing: **infrastructural, destination** and **educational**.

Infrastructure: The availability of all kinds of technical networks, including the Internet, should be a basic condition. Without it, it will not be possible to operate tourism in the future. A number of roads are in need of repair. Parking lots tend to be a weak point, not only at important monuments but in rural areas in general. In connection with the development of motorhomes/caravans, progress must also be made in the construction of parking spaces equipped with technical connections. A significant contribution can also be the construction of cycle paths, but they must be integrated into a county-wide network, must be consistently separated from car traffic and must be equipped with other infrastructure - rest areas, refreshments, rental offices, storage facilities, repair shops and the like.

Destination: An important initiative of the South Moravian Region in cooperation with the Tourist Authority South Moravia was the start of management certification in the region's destination management areas, which will take place at the state level from 2022. However, in order to make their activities sufficiently complex and planned, destination managements **need regular funding**.

Education: The region is the founder of secondary schools. Due to the acute lack of qualified workers and the expected increase of this need in the future, training and graduation programs focused on tourism should be introduced. These programs should be accredited so that they expand knowledge in the field of cultural tourism, in addition to technological and economic knowledge.

Fig. 2 *The band Šardičanka in Pavlov village. In this case, it is an attempt to export folklore from traditional Moravian Slovakia to villages settled by German population before the WWII. Photo by A. Vaishar*

SPOT

Project Identity

Project name	Social and innovative Platform on Cultural Tourism and its potential towards deepening Europeanisation (SPOT)
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Website and social networks	www.SPOTprojectH2020.eu fb: @SPOTprojectH2020 twitter: @H2020Spo
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ISRAEL

PolicyBRIEF

SPOT
SOCIAL AND INNOVATIVE PLATFORM
ON CULTURAL TOURISM
AND ITS POTENTIAL TOWARDS
DEEPENING EUROPEANISATION

www.SPOTprojectH2020.eu

July 2022 | SPOT Policy Brief #8

Valley of Springs regional council and Bet-She'an town

For local policymakers

Author: BIU team

Introduction

BIU's case study area is peripheral; however, it is not homogenous. It consists of a rural area (Valley of Springs regional council) and an urban area (the town of Beit She'an). The Valley of Springs offers numerous and diversified tourism sites and activities, most of them are natural, and the others are man-made. The area's cultural and other touristic assets are managed and operated by a few authorities/bodies, most of which are state affiliated with no local affiliation. In particular, the area holds more than 40 natural springs, birdwatching spots, historical sites, fabulous bridges, and unique flora and fauna. Among the most visited sites is Valley of the Springs Trail which is a 140 km long circular track; it passes through many springs, streams, mountains, forests, and archaeological sites. The most popular site is the Gan HaShlosha (Sahne) National Park. This park, as well as others, is under the responsibility and management of the Israel National Parks and Natural Reserves. The Jewish National Fund is responsible for the Gilboa Nature Reserve, which covers 1829 hectares and includes Mount Saul, Saul's Shoulders, Tel Jezreel, the Hidden Valley and other sites. Ten out

of 25 settlements in the regional council operate B&B facilities for overnighters, most of them are privately owned and considered small to medium businesses. Other than accommodations, about 12 settlements offer activities such as Reflexology, Shiatsu and Cosmetics, Wood Carving and art Workshops, Horse Farm, Bicycle Rental, Heritage Sites, Agricultural Visitor Center, Bird Center, Museum, and last but not least, is the Kangaroos Park (6.7 hectares) which attracts numerous visitors each year. The council also supports local tourism in the settlements themselves. This includes support in cultural events, exhibitions and festivals. Finally, the Israeli Council for Conservation of heritage Sites is responsible for heritage sites in the kibbutzim themselves and promotes activities that attract local tourism. While there are no formal data regarding the economic reliance of the regional councils on tourism, most of the settlements in the region operate successful industrial plants, as well as agricultural production and services. Although, there are no formal statistics on visitors' numbers and over-night staying in the regional council of the Valley of Springs, based on data collected by Israeli National Parks and Natural Reserves, in 2018 Gan HaShlosha national park was ranked second in popularity among domestic tourists, and it dropped to the 8th place in 2020. Altogether, these suggest that despite the richness and uniqueness of the region, it has still a long way to fulfill its potential among domestic tourists and more importantly, among incoming tourists.

Fig. 1 Ein Shokek- Valley of Springs Park. Source: https://www.yolo-blog.com/ein-shokek/

In 2016, the Regional Council of the Valley of Springs initiated the Slow Tourism initiative, calling tourists to enjoy hiking trails and natural springs (slow tourism has become a global trend in recent years). However, this initiative did not reach maturity and its potential was not materialized. COVID-19, which outbroke in Israel by early 2020, has probably contributed to this.

As for the town of Beit She'an, the town hosts several cultural and historical sites, most of them managed by the Israeli Antiquities Authority. A dominant attraction is the Beit She'an National Park, which houses the ruins of the Roman and Byzantine city of Beit She'an. This park hosts several attractions of high international importance, the most prominent of which is the Roman Theater. The town itself provides limited support to the tourism sector. Albeit this low involvement, in 2015 via a joint initiative of the municipality of Beit She'an and the Jewish National Fund, the Eucalyptus Park was opened for the residents of Beit She'an and the surrounding area, with an investment of 7 million Euros. The park includes 10 hectares of lawns, shady corners, ornamental corners, playgrounds and unique water attractions. The park should be a significant entertainment anchor for the residents of the town and the surrounding area, and attract visitors from all over the country who will visit the tourist centres in the Beit She'an National Park and the entire valley.

Fig. 2 The Beit She'an National Park. Source: Israeli National Parks and Natural Reserves

Finally, the South Jordan Drainage and Streams Authority are responsible for the development of scenic landscapes and the restoration, preservation, and development of sites in the region. The rehabilitation actions include returning endemic species to the river area. The scenic restoration includes the arrangement of hiking trails, and the establishment and accessibility of sites, vegetation and places of recreation, including wading pools.

Based on data from the Ministry of Peripheral Development the town is attracting about 250,000 visitors annually (prior to COVID-19) and it was ranked 20th on the list of the most visited destinations of foreign tourists in 2018. Although there was some upward trend in the number of tourists to the town, the numbers are still far from being sufficient. Moreover, the tourists who are coming, do not stay more than a few hours in the town and spend their money in other places. This poses a serious challenge since the economic basis of Beit She'an is not solid, and it is dependent on tourism development.

A common challenge to both Beit She'an and the Valley of Springs is that they only marginally attract incoming tourists resulting in a large share of domestic visitors who do not stay in the area for long hauls. This is largely due to limited accessibility to the area, which locates far from the country's main metropolitan areas. There are no high-speed, multi-lane, highways, and public transport is not sufficient in terms of frequency as well as first-and-last-mile travel behaviour (for example, while there is a train to Bet-She'an, it reaches only the outskirts of the town), resulting in frequent traffic congestion, and long and tedious driving. With no sufficient accommodation facilities in both municipalities (especially for large organized groups), day visiting is challenging. This, in turn, leads to a negative feedback loop; low accessibility and lack of accommodation facilities result in stagnation in the number of visitors, which in turn de-incentivizes investment initiatives in accommodation and other facilities in the area.

The **COVID-19 pandemic** led to a massive reduction in visitors and the various lockdowns resulted in a high proportion of tourism businesses shut down for long periods of time beginning in March 2020. The area does not enjoy powerful local governance which can lobby for government support. Accordingly, business owners reported that they received partial or no assistance from the government, and many were forced to furlough their employees, with some laying off employees completely. Most business owners reported that their financial ability to withstand the crisis is only for a few months. This means that many businesses are in danger of collapsing and closing their activities.

1. Evidence and Analysis

BIU through the EU-funded SPOT cultural tourism project collected qualitative and quantitative data via several means including 1. In-depth interviews were conducted with officials in both municipalities including managers of heritage sites.; 2. Surveys among samples of residents, visitors and tourism businesses; 3. Two roundtable meetings were held with local entrepreneurs in order to obtain their wider viewpoints; 4. Field trips in the region to both municipalities. While the surveys were conducted in late 2020, the roundtable meeting took place in late 2021 and 2022. An additional short survey of business owners (containing Covid-19-related questions only) was also conducted in late 2021. The answers to this second survey were somewhat different and it seems that the additional year spent coping with the pandemic expanded the potential solutions for coping with the pandemic's effects. The collected data were integrated and processed to allow drawing insights and describe the main problems faced by each municipality as well as common problems both face.

The evidence brought below, demonstrates how a lack of information-based planning, cooperation and the shortage of skilled managerial labour (the human factor) can inhibit the development of a viable tourism sector in an area that is abundant with rare natural assets and rich with important cultural and historical sites.

1.1. The town of Beit She'an

Beit She'an town has a relatively low socio-economic profile resulting in **low-skilled labor, and limited tools and knowledge required to develop, design, and operate a proliferating tourism sector**. Its residents suffer from a lack of access to capital and there are no institutions for higher education in the vicinity of the town. As a result, the young generation is leaving the town. This leads

to a vicious circle, in which, a lack of employment opportunities, drives the young, educated citizens away from Beit She'an, which in turn reduces the odds of tourism development. In addition, Beit She'an's unique micro-climate (with **extremely hot summers**) leads to **high seasonality**, more than the average in the industry.

In Beit She'an municipality there is **no official who is responsible for tourism**. The town relies on a group of volunteers, with limited capacity, resources, and information. This is a major problem that cannot be bypassed.

What seems to prevent any progress in the tourism sector in Beit She'an are **political issues and internal intrigues that inhibit long-term planning**. Each new mayor initiates new plans and abandons/cancels part of the initiatives of its formers. During the period of the project, we received little cooperation from the municipality, we got minimal access to information (sometimes because the information does not exist). Officials in the municipality seem to have lost faith in receiving support from the central government.

The most striking manifestation of these problems in Beit She'an is the **negligence surrounding a number of its tourist assets**; Historic sites from the Roman period are standing empty for long periods. Most of these historic sites do have limited number of complementary sites in their surroundings (restaurants and other attractions) and there is a severe shortage of accommodation facilities) which indicates a lack of supporting initiative.

The fact that tourist activity is managed and promoted by state bodies has a two-folded effect on the tourism sector in the region. On the one hand, due to the lack of highly skilled professionals in tourism management and operation at the local level, these bodies are in a better position to hire high-skilled professionals from out of the region. On the other hand, some of the festivals, and other mass events (e.g., 'Beit She'an Nights') that are supported by these government bodies are not coordinated with the town of Beit Sh'ean which in turn does not benefit economically from these events.

1.2. Valley of Springs regional council

The regional council hosts several anchor attractions including Kangaroos Park and Gan HaShlosha. However, the rest are small businesses, and most of them are family-held. **There are no medium-sized tourist attractions. Moreover, these small sites are outdated, not professionally managed and run**. There is a significant lack of holistic destination management that takes into account compatibility between neighbouring attractions, based on visitors' preferences for diversity and attractions' complementarities.

1.3. Common problems

Most of the bodies that run the major tourist attractions in the area are government bodies (e.g., the Jewish National Fund, Israel National Parks and Natural Reserves, and Israel Antiquities Authority), therefore there is no encouragement of private initiatives. A good example is a fact that the Drainage Authority is responsible for developing scenic tourism in the Valley of Springs. All these government bodies state that they are working to develop local tourism for the benefit of the local population, but the fact stands out that for all of them, managers are not necessarily residents of the area.

Both municipalities demonstrate an inadequate (if any) systematic marketing strategy, with Bet-She'an even less marketing oriented. There is no exhaustive platform that provides in one place all data required to potential visitors in an easy and tractable manner. Both municipalities' websites, including the pages with touristic information, do not have English versions, which emphasizes the lack of orientation to overseas tourists.

2. Policy Implications and Recommendations

Based on the accumulated data and evidence we recommend the following policy:

- As noted by Edwards Deming 'Without data, you're just another person with an opinion'. One of the most pertaining issues arising from our study is the lack of formal, consistently collected, quantitative tourism data. There is an urgent need to assign a body that will be in charge of periodical data collection regarding tourism arrivals (domestic and incoming), overnight stays, the number of visitors to the different sites etc. Such data are crucial to understanding trends, seasonality, and for prediction. Periodical surveys among visitors are needed to document visitors' expenditures in the area, in order to measure the economic contribution of tourism to the different sectors of the local economy.

- An important end-users of tourism data in the area are tourism destination managers appointed by each municipality. Currently, there are no such positions in the municipalities. It is important to assign resources to fill these positions. In the regional council, it is recommended to have a manager in each settlement. These officials are recommended to establish a forum for advancing tourism in the entire region.

- There is a lack of long-term data and knowledge-based destination planning. This is reflected in sporadic local initiatives which are usually not reaching maturity. Therefore, there is a need for holistic long-term destination planning that would focus on attraction/site design and development and compatibility. Visitor attractions are considered the raison d'etre for tourism destinations to exist, and a key pull factor for destination development. Destinations can benefit from developing a carefully designed and balanced bundle of attractions and thereby exploit potential synergies and external economics.

- It is important to build trust and coordination between the town and the regional council. The town and the regional council offer complementary tourism sites (natural, water, and wildlife vs. cultural and historic sites). These complementarities can be used for the benefit of both municipalities, but it requires a joint marketing strategy and efforts to enhance collaboration rather than competition.

- Climate change. Given the temperature rise and the particular location of the area, which is characterized by extremely hot summers, indoor activities need to be developed in new and existing sites. Given that the regional council hosts numerous springs, indoor facilities as well as the development of 'night tourism' are more important in Beit She'an town. Developing night tourism will help the town to benefit from the events organized by government bodies by setting up cafes and restaurants along the paths leading from the city to the antiquities sites. In order to promote night tourism, the town will benefit from cooperation with the regional council; visitors to the area could be recommended to spend the hot summer days in and around the cool springs in the regional council and spend the nights in Beit She'an's cultural and historical site, creating this an attractive bundle of experience.

- There is a dearth of government support and management in this area. This includes subsidized loans, workshops, and mentoring from the phase of planning till the ongoing operation.
- Based on these challenges and the policy implications we have drawn above; we strongly recommend the adoption of the SPOT-IT tool as a key management tool for decision-making at all levels. The tool can provide an ideal platform for documenting all tourism-related data, processing them, and providing the most updated data at any time. The tool can offer good visualization of data, by the conversion of numbers into GIS layers. The tool can allow a spatial 'view from above' of the entire area and help identify opportunities and deficiencies of complementary facilities and infrastructure. It can promote collaboration between the regional council and the town, by providing a common platform for tourism managers. Finally, public participation in tourism development is currently in its infancy in the area, is accommodated by the tool, and can be improved by it.

Project Identity

Project name	Social and innovative Platform on Cultural Tourism and its potential towards deepening Europeanisation (SPOT)
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8

SPOT-IT

PolicyBRIEF

SPOT
SOCIAL AND INNOVATIVE PLATFORM
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DEEPENING EUROPEANISATION

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SPOT-IT: concept, innovativeness, beneficiaries, and policy recommendations

For European, National and Local Policymakers

Author: BIU team

This is the issue in a series of Policy Briefs that present the main findings and practical outcomes of an EU-funded research project SPOT (2020-2022). We inform all groups of stakeholders involved in the development of cultural tourism in Europe about what we have found out during our multi-national study implemented in 15 countries and share with you several policy-related recommendations and other results that might be useful in your professional work.

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Introduction

21st-century tourism focuses not only on the cultural values, conservation and economic potential of property or landscape. It is also influenced by (and influences) physical changes such as climate change; social and economic changes, including cultural differences and diversity; global crisis (e.g., Covid19), migration and opportunities for quick and easy movement from place to place; cross-border communication; and globally accessible information. These changes have also greatly impacted the definition of Cultural Heritage Tourism, its characteristics and its development. On one hand, there is a growing demand for it, on the other hand, there is an increasing concern about surpassing the carrying capacity and therefore harming cultural heritage sites and cultural landscapes. Social, ethical, and environmental issues became essential, and sometimes even more important than economic issues, which have characterized the tourism industry so far.

The changes that have taken place in the definition and characterization of cultural tourism require the creation of new measurement and management tools that can tackle all the issues that need to be considered when planning, marketing, and analyzing cultural tourism sites, their components, and the relationships between them.

In addition, as cultural tourism is not a widely identified identity, specific data is rarely collected. The purpose of the SPOT-IT tool is to deal with this complexity, and the lack of available data, by enabling to gather, in one platform, multiple information layers, pertaining to Cultural tourism development and management, at a high-resolution level and accuracy while leveraging technological advancement in GIS and machine learning, and involving multiple stakeholders. In particular, this tool can help support long-term planning that includes spatial elements, infrastructure, climate, zoning, and other considerations.

1. SPOT-IT: its concept, innovativeness, and contribution

SPOT-IT is a GIS-based innovative tool designed for planners, organizers, developers, and other stakeholders of cultural tourism. The tool was developed by a group of researchers and designers from Bar-Ilan University (Israel) and incorporates inputs from all 14 European teams and Israel that contributed with empirical data from their case studies and tested the tool with their local and regional stakeholders.

1.1 The concept of SPOT-IT

The tool is designed to endow power to its user and allows several sources of flexibility including the choice of data layers to be used.

The tool's general idea is to create an innovative GIS-based website that provides a decision support mechanism for developing **cultural tourism (CT) sites and infrastructure**. SPOT-IT is needed for entrepreneurs, local authorities, local residents, and others who wish to receive extensive and diversified information (visually and geo-references represented) regarding visiting, promoting, and initiating new projects of cultural tourism in a given area. It is required since this information is currently not well complied with, organized, presented, and processed in a manageable manner that allows for decision-making for the development of CT sites and infrastructure.

The **multiple data layers**, their **integration**, and their **spatial representation** stand at the heart of the tool. The more accurate and diversified the data the better-informed decisions can be made. Effective decision-making requires information on regional development aspects with a spatial context.

The logical block scheme of the SPOT-IT tool can be found in Figure 1.
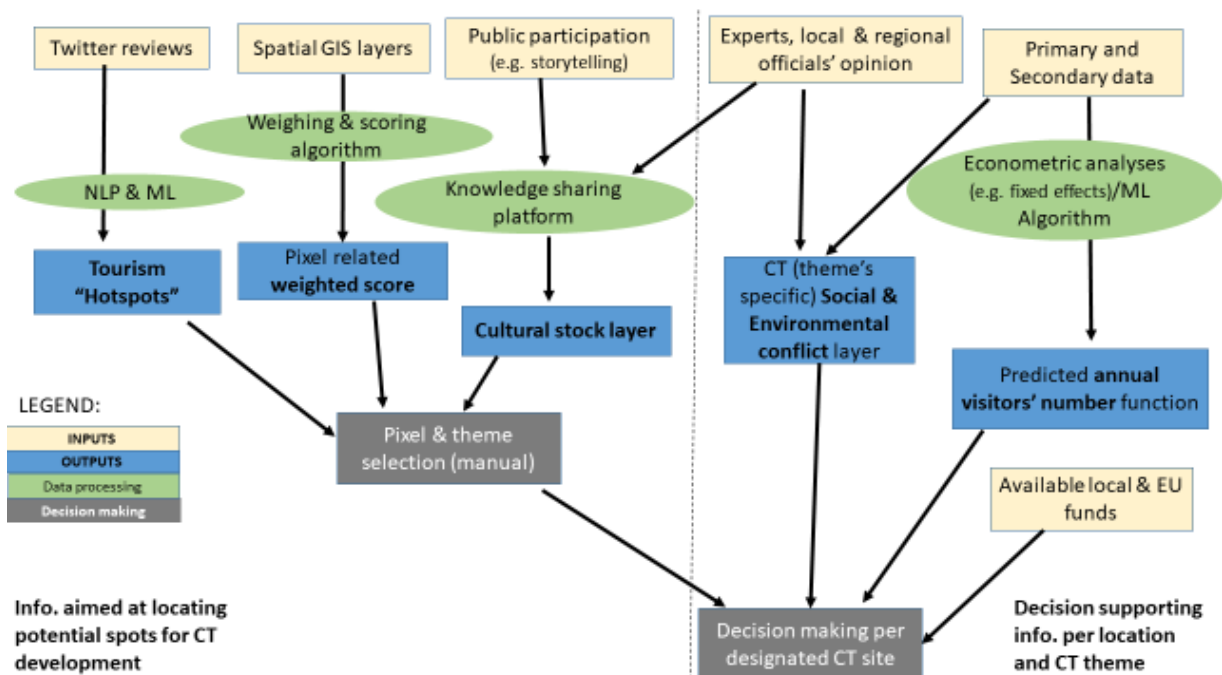
Figure 1: Logical block scheme of the SPOT-IT tool

Based on the literature and experts' opinions, it was decided which data variables are relevant to the development and strengthening of CT, and how to integrate the desired social, economic, and environmental data. This is a challenging process given that some case studies consist of one municipality while others include several municipalities, also, some case studies are purely rural, while others are hybrid with an urban/rural mixture.

1.2 The innovativeness of SPOT-IT TOOL

The tool is innovative in its conceptualization. It delivers in one place, exhaustive and diversified information (data layers, which are visually, and geo-references represented) including, but not limited to, data on transportation and tourism-related infrastructure (including built and natural ones), zoning data, potential social and environmental tourism-related conflicts, micro-climate data, demographics and another socio-economic indicator on the location. These data layers can support initiatives for cultural tourism development and management. The data is provided on one user-friendly platform to facilitate decision-making.

In addition, to the multiple data layers, the tool provides:

(1) **Suitability analysis** component that allows the user to define the desired criteria for initiating, developing, and visiting cultural tourism sites, based on the location's peculiar attributes;

(2) **Visitors' prediction algorithm** that allows the user to receive an estimate of the economic performance of new initiatives in cultural tourism;

(3) Data layers that are based on **machine learning** tools operated on users generated content in social media.

(4) **Public participation platform** that allows the local community to actively participate in the process of cultural tourism development

1.3 What is the importance of SPOT-IT and who are its main beneficiaries

SPOT-IT can encourage a range of stakeholders to initiate cultural development activities from the personal/business level (micro) up to the regional and national levels (macro). The tool can

benefit, every entity that has an interest in developing cultural tourism, or that is affected by it, with a strong emphasis on peripheral and de-industrialized areas.

This includes, yet is not limited to

- Tourism officials, and planning authorities at the national, regional and local levels
- Local authorities and residents including ethnic and cultural minorities.
- Sponsors, and entrepreneurs to be able to evaluate the development potential of a given cultural heritage asset.
- Scholars of Cultural tourism in colleges and universities
- local and international visitors for trip planning using one platform, which includes most if not all the information required to optimize the experience.

Several examples of the importance of the tool are:

Rural and peripheral municipalities can be empowered and encouraged to cooperate since the tool can support combined decision-making processes.

The relatively wide access to the tool may lead to cross-ministries, cross-municipalities, and cross-regional initiatives, for joint, synergetic, cultural tourism projects.

The tool can also be used at the supra-regional level (district, national, global) by developing new attractions and pulling tourist human and economic capital to those less developed areas. The development momentum can potentially have impacts on a large scale, economically, socially and image-wise.

The tool allows a preliminary examination of a site in relation to its tangible and intangible cultural attractions, carrying capacity, accessibility, and available tourism services.

SPOT-IT encourages tourism planners to work with local communities, empower them, and put them in charge of cultural tourism through co-design with local stakeholders. It can help realize the local and regional economic (and other) benefits from cultural tourism.

The tool can help in marketing the area and the cultural tourism sites in it, by its ability to identify unique special propositions [USP] as well as clusters of compatible cultural assets, that may attract tourists to the region.

Updated information regarding opportunities for active travel (walking, cycling) can motivate visitors to visit the area and can reduce the negative impact of tourism whilst spreading the economic benefit.

The tool enriches the visit experience; it encourages the pre-planning of thematic tours. For example, a visit to several heritage sites related to a certain historical event, or a visit following an adventure or plot described in a book. Future extensions of the tool can include options for booking sites, communicating with site operators and other visitors, booking tickets for shows and festivals, leaving feedback etc**.**

Each type of cultural tourism being developed has its own infrastructure requirements. This is linked to planning issues and concerns with implementation issues. The tool can help in this process by providing visualized information on the already existing local infrastructure, and its spatial characteristics.

2. Policy recommendations

Following designing the SPOT-IT tool, we conclude with several policy recommendations

1. While the conceptualization of the tool is universal, its specifications should be place-dependent. Therefore, it is recommended to develop the tool for each location (e.g., city or regional councils and other urban and rural municipalities) based on its needs and specific characteristics.

2. It is recommended to involve stakeholders from the very beginning of the process and harness the local officials. The cooperation of local officials is essential for the successful implementation of the tool.

3. It is recommended to leverage the public participation platform to accommodate feedback and recommendation related to the current local, and regional, development policy and planning programs. The tool can promote structured idea exchange (thinking outside the box) between people involved in the cultural tourism industries and local administrations.

4. SPOT-IT includes an exhaustive yet limited set of components and features. It should not be offered to stakeholders as a 'one-size fits all' decision-making platform. It should allow for flexibility wherein potential users choose their optimal mix of components.

5. After the project ends, the responsibility for the operation of the tool, including its maintenance, and regular updates, should be granted to tourism departments/councils at the regional level, which have the resources to do so. **Procedures for regular and ongoing updates of the tool should be established**, for a pre-defined time period, (for example, a quarter). Such updates include data regarding new tourism sites or facilities (or the closure of existing ones), public or private. These can be received from local Business Licensing Departments, Nature and Parks Authority, Nature and Parks Authority, etc. Updates should also include data on new infrastructure (e.g., transportation), socio-demographical and economic data from the Central Bureau of Statistics, zoning updates from National, and regional planning authorities, climatic data from the Meteorological services, and so on. The entities responsible for the updates and maintenance of the tool should ensure that it is accessible to all stakeholders, yet, only authorized bodies can access to edit data.

6. Given the high variability between EU countries, regions, and within regions, and expected dynamics over time, the need for novel features and layers might emerge. There should be a structured channel through which ideas for novel features could be raised.

7. Given the tool's multiple layers and features, it is recommended to initiate annual workshops for potential stakeholders at the local level (in fact, everyone interested in tourism) to provide hands-on experience with the tool and receive feedback from users.

8. Extending and adding more layers based on content (visual and textual) analysis from social media is recommended. These layers provide more reliable information regarding tourism sites and landscapes (compared to TripAdvisor and Google ratings which might be biased). These layers have raised the interest of stakeholders in the case studies.

9. Technically speaking, it is suggested to transform the tool platform to an open code, because

it can lower the cost of the tool by saving the yearly cost of the ArcGIS server license.

10. It is recommended to establish a mechanism through which tools of localities in the same region/district could communicate and share knowledge in a manner that allows better cooperation between nearby localities.

11. It is recommended to allow dialogue between tourism planners and planning (or other) authorities. For example, the suitability analysis of the tool may suggest locations with the optimal condition to succeed as cultural tourism sites, yet zoning may restrict it. The tool might open a path for dialogue between different entities to benefit responsible tourism development.

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8

Buzău Carpathians and Subcarpathians

For regional and local policymakers

Autor: IGAR team

Introduction

The study area is characterized by the complex topography of mountains, hills and depressions with specific physical-geographic characteristics, i.e., steep slopes, dense river network (Micu, Bălteanu, 2011) and moderate temperate-continental climate, particularly relevant being the foehn winds (Grofu, Dragotă, 2013). As a result, the accessible relief, mild climate, the presence of mineral and hydrocarbon deposits, the mountain-plain contact propitious to intense trade relations, has encouraged the development of human activities since early times. Buzău Carpathians and Subcarpathians is one of the most populated geographic regions of Romania with a developed network of villages spreading along a dense river system with an average population density of 90 inh./km^2, raising up to 150 inh./km^2 along the main valleys (Buzău, Slănic, Râmnic) (Nancu, 2013).

The study-area is a predominantly rural region facing complex socio-economic and environmental challenges (Stoica, Munteanu, 2012). After multiple socio-economic transformations (following the implementation of Communist policy guidelines and of the post-1990 economic, social and political transition), the study-area, similar to all rural and urban areas in Romania, faced numerous difficulties which are reflected in the unbalance between the environmental components, the under development of the rural economy, finally reflected into wellbeing of the rural communities. During the last decades, the demographic and labour potential registered decreasing trends (Nancu, 2013, Stoica, Munteanu, 2012).

Most of the active population is engaged in subsistence agriculture which generates low incomes, hiding some potential labour force that can be involved in various economic activities (Stoica, 2013). Tourist activity is one of them, but the labour potential is not capitalized through adequate qualification and entrepreneurial education. In some cases, the development of tourist sites has revitalized the countryside (Nancu, 2013), enhancing the social and economic cohesion. The development of study-area should be tackled while taking into consideration the local natural and human resources valorised through the tourist activity and the preservation of traditional customs and identity items.

The tourism potential and the attraction sights are important to understand the richness and diversity of the elements linked to Cultural Tourism, as they were perceived by the residents. In the following lines, the main objectives/sites/activities of the natural and anthropic potential are listed at local administrative units level: (A) *the natural tourism potential* represented by the mud volcanoes (in Berca), Ulmetu trovants (in Bozioru), Live Fires, Mociaru Lake, Salt Mountain and Cave (all in Lopătari), Caşoca Valley and Waterfall (in Siriu), Bottomless Lake, Meledic Salt Plateau, Salt Cave (all in Mânzăleşti). In the study area, Buzău Valley offers opportunities for rafting and kayaking and the relief favours outdoor activities such as trekking, hiking, climbing, mountain biking, etc.; (B) *the anthropic tourist potential* which are grouped into religious sites (Ciolanu Monastery in Tisău, Răteşti and Berca monasteries in Berca), cave religious settlements (in Aluniş village in Colţi and in Nucu village from Bozioru commune); museums (*Colţi Amber Collection,* so called *"The Amber Museum Colţi"*, which belongs to the *Buzau County Museum* - https://www.muzeubuzau.ro/?lang=en&venue=colectia-de-chihlimbar-colti,*"Vasile Voiculescu" Memorial House* in Pârscov, https://www.muzeubuzau.ro/?lang=en&venue=casa-memoriala-vasile-voiculescu-parscov, *The Museum of Shapes* - in Bozioru, https://www.facebook.com/MuzeulFormelor/, *Museum "7 story places"* - in Lopătari, https://www.facebook.com/7locuridepoveste), The Time of Man Museum - in Mânzăleşti, https://www.facebook.com/MuzeulTimpulOmului/); festivals (i.e., the Commune Day Festivals organized by almost each settlement, the Pietroasele *"Tămâioasa"* Feast, the most famous aromatic wine produced in Pietroasle village (Merei commune), the Sausage Festival in Pleşcoi (Berca commune); sculpture camps in Măgura - https://www.muzeubuzau.ro/?lang=en&venue=tabara-de-sculptura-de-la-magura) and Naeni, as the wine tasting, religious activities ("hram"), Cislău Stud, etc. The recently declared (April 2022) UNESCO Geopark "Buzău Land" (https://tinutulbuzaului.org/) supports the sustainable development, civic involvement, education, economy and environmental protection through different actions and activities among the promotion of cultural and human patrimonies.

Fig. 1. Pietroasa Viticulture and Winemaking Research and Development Station

Fig. 2. "7 Locuri de Poveste" Museum, Lopătari

Fig. 3. Aluniş Cave Churches

Features related to the Survey applied to tourists. Communities with poor road infrastructure, where agriculture is the predominant economic activity, as the Buzău Carpathians and Subcarpathians area, are gradually returning to the attention of tourists looking for an unpolluted and quiet environment, traditional food made from organic vegetables, away from urban agglomerations. Within the Romanian study-area, the cultural tourist attractions are beginning to be known by an increasing number of visitors. During the survey, tourists from the nearby areas (under 250 km), aged between 30-50 years, having as main motivation, along with gastronomy and local traditions, visiting cultural attractions were mainly identified. These are tourists who return to the destinations and always find them attractive through new cultural events and local traditions that deepen their knowledge. Even if the infrastructure inside the area is not very developed, this shortage is compensated by the scenery of the natural environment, the tranquillity and the existing cultural heritage that gradually reveals its value.

Features related to the Survey applied to residents: The profile of the residents whose perception on cultural tourism was quizzed is outlined by the following characteristics: living in rural areas, middle aged (with an aging trend), high school graduates with a low level of income, with tertiary occupation but with agriculture as "background" activity. The study highlights that their socio-economic and demographic profile is an important factor in modelling the ways in which the cultural tourism attractions within the Buzău Carpathians and Subcarpathians are perceived. Thus, the residents recognized cultural tourism as a mixture of the natural and cultural dimensions of local reality, but the greatest cultural importance has the religious sites/events, local traditions/folklore, cultural heritage and historical sites and buildings and the cultural routes. The residents are well connected to the local context and feel their own inhabited environment as being a whole where the cultural tourism objectives are (or should be) integrated into the socio-economic and historic background. They also have a positive perception about the impact that an increase of cultural tourism has on the area (e.g., infrastructure, jobs, and quality of life). At personal level, the cultural tourism impacts show the potential job creation. To valorise the cultural tourism attractions within the study-area, the residents could play the role of informal advisers and advertisers. These two roles are significantly important as the lack of signalling/information regarding tourist objectives/sites and events, is high. These roles are important, but they are capitalized only on a personal level and from a kind of debt as a local, who is proud of his own place and he is happy to share its beauty with others, who are interested (as the tourists are).

Features related to the Survey applied to businesses: The overall businesses' perspective on cultural tourism in the area shows that the largest share of respondents referred to the role of national or regional authorities (government) in the development of tourism in terms of helping businesses and supporting investments. Also, significant shares pinpoint the necessity to increase the number of tourists and/or the regulation of tourist flows. These statements indicate that cultural tourism in the area requires serious investments to attract as many tourists as possible. Local businesses do not have enough power to grow and sustain themselves, so top-down institutional support is needed. At the same time, the interviewees agreed to a large extent that the cultural tourism potential of the region is very high, so there is hope for the improvement of the tourist offer through investments and logistics.

Fig. 4. Gabioti Pleșcoi Store   Fig. 5. Ciolanu Monastery   Fig. 6. Mud Vulcanoes

1.   Evidence and Analysis

Within the Romanian case-study, the **gaps** in the current state and in the development of cultural tourism field are related to the following aspects: **Infrastructure, Business environment, Human resources in the field of cultural tourism** and **Tourism potential.**

1.1.   Infrastructure

- the poor road infrastructure - with negative direct impact on the level of isolation, many rural communities being outside tourist circuits due to the poor accessibility;
- the poor infrastructure of public utilities (i.e., gas, drinking water and sewage networks) in the rural areas;
- the infrastructure for hiking, the forest roads and the mountain paths are unmarked and not properly maintained;
- the low development of tourism infrastructure;
- the lack of shops for tourists (souvenirs, maps, guides, leaflets) or the inappropriate type of shops (with ,,globalised,, products or manufactured in other countries, having no elements/specificities with local traditions);
- the existence of old and non-authentic tourist infrastructure such as accommodation units.

The issues linked with the poor different types of infrastructure are further aggravated by several risks, such as: the low capacity of the population and small business to take specific costs of operation and maintenance of infrastructure rehabilitation/construction, due to the limited financial and material possibilities; and the non-sustainable development of some rural areas, as a result of opting for an urbanized model of development (i.e., big and non-specific accommodation structures) to the detriment of the rural authenticity.

1.2.   Business environment

- the unstable fiscal and legislative environment;
- the poor valorisation of the economic opportunities (i.e., the tourism activity based on the capitalisation of local cultural tourism potential) because of the less informed and insufficient motivated rural population;
- the limited investments, caused by the lack of local financial resources and by the lack of long-term mechanisms for the development of tourism activities;
- the low degree of association and cooperation of SMEs;
- the poor competitiveness of companies.

1.3.   Human resources in the field of cultural tourism

- the poor cooperation between actors in the tourism market;
- the low levels of education and also, in tourism specialisations and training of the rural population have direct and significant effects on their real possibilities and capabilities to develop and maintain activity in the field of tourism;
- the lack of training-counselling centres or consulting centres for those interested in carrying out activities in the field of tourism industry;
- migration of skilled labour force to other areas of the country or other countries;
- the improper training and capitalising on the labour force through its integration programs.

1.4.   Tourism potential

- the lack of cooperation between settlements for the development of tourism industry in the study-area;
- the degradation of the local cultural heritage (i.e., the art and architecture monuments);
- the tendency towards the loss or degradation of traditions and customs in the rural area;
- the "cultural pollution";
- the lack of some complex tourist products that combine traditions, local heritage and innovation.

All these issues have policy implications, and the local and regional stakeholders should take in view them when they propose and promote the directions/trends of the development policy in the cultural tourism sector. Also, the academic actors should have as base of their policy recommendations these gaps above mentioned.

2.   Policy Implications and Recommendations

The following recommendations can be formulated from the above analysis:

- **Policy Recommendation 1: Promoting the relevant Representative Business Organisations** such as **(a) the Chambers of Commerce** and **(b) Local Action Groups.**

(a) the Chambers of Commerce **=** Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Buzău County which is created to represent, defend and support the interests of its members and of the business community of Buzău in relation with the public authorities and with the bodies in the country and abroad. Their mission is to be the main promoter of local, regional and national economic development and to provide specialized and professional services, to current and future traders, in a competent manner, fair and efficient. The Chamber offers services related to Events for information and business meetings (ex: the Forum Food and beverage for tourism) and Fairs and exhibitions.

(b) Local Action Groups (LAGs) = "Buzău Hills"/"Colinele Buzăului" (*Berca, Bozioru, Brăești, Cănești, Cozieni, Măgura, Odăile, Pârscov, Scorțoasa, Tisău, Unguriu*), Local Action Group (LAG) "Slănic Valley"/"Valea Slănicului" (*Beceni, Cernătești, Chiliile, Lopătari, Mânzăleşti, Săpoca, Verneşti, Vintilă-Vodă*), Local Action Group (LAG) "The Wine Road"/"Drumul Vinului" (*Breaza, Merei, Năeni, Pietroasele*), Local Action Group (LAG) "Buzău Valley"/"Valea Buzăului" (*Cislău, Viperești, Calvini, Cătina, Chojdu, Pătârlagele, Pănătău, Gura Teghii*). They are private-public partnerships whose purpose is to support the potential beneficiaries (private entrepreneurs, mayors, associations, etc.) from the territory covered by the LAGs to access non-reimbursable European funds, available through the National Rural Development Program (PNDR) to finance some projects focused on different types of investments and activities (included the non-agricultural ones, such the tourism etc.).

- **Policy Recommendation 2: The cooperation between local administration and NGOs, between all local players**. This cooperation capitalizes the good practice since cultural tourism encouraged the engagement of community members within the study-area (the involvement of locals - e.g., craftsmen or performers of traditional music) in cultural events with local and even regional importance. This dialogue will increase the possibilities for investment and local business innovation to make cultural tourism more attractive. The collaboration will facilitate the networking and the transferability of "good practices" examples between stakeholders.

- **Policy Recommendation 3: Elaborating a general strategy focused on the ways of developing Cultural tourism in the area.** This strategy should be based on a common vision that is owned, agreed upon and shared by the community, is placed-based, authentic and realistic, always being underlined that the local level/places are most important in terms of cultural tourism development.

- **Policy Recommendation 4: Elaborating a strategy focused especially on the preservation of the uniqueness/otherness of the place.** This strategy should be based on cultural heritage or/and local traditions. The idea of "otherness" is mirrored by those elements of local culture that are distinctive and different from other areas, creating the personality of study-area. Among them, we could mention: - *the unicity* within the Romania (or even within Europe – the case of Sărata Monteoru oil mine) of several cultural attraction, such as the religious cave settlements from Aluniș and Nucu villages, and natural tourist attractions (but, according to the opinion of locals, authorities/stakeholders and tourists are integrated into the place culture/place identity) such as the Mud Volcanoes, Salt plateau of Meledic, Colți amber (called "rumanit", after the name of Romania, being older than the Baltic amber and having a distinctive and unique black-green colour); - *the mythical elements*: Luana's Land, the mythical place located in Buzău Mountains, between Colți and Buzioru, where other unique and mythic attractions exists, such the Old ladies/Trovants from Ulmet (Bozioru), the stone which grow, and amber, named "the Earth's tears" or "the Sun's drops";

- **Policy Recommendation 5: Promoting the involvement of residents (locals) in different local and/or regional events.** This will rise the interests of locals for cultural tourism, and will added real value to these events (through the inclusion of the "local dimension"). This involvement could be way of local volunteers, but even more useful by employing "locals", which means local businesses, local vendors and artists.

- **Policy Recommendation 6: Raising the awareness of cultural tourism as an educational tool for communities´ development and for regional and local development.**

- **Policy Recommendation 7: Increasing the digital promotion and facilitation of information about Cultural Tourism to improve the visibility of cultural tourism attractions and promote social inclusion.**

Project Identity

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7

The development of soft tourism in the region Lieberose / Oberspreewald

For local policymakers

Author: IOER team

SPOT project and purpose

The EU-funded SPOT project aims to develop a new approach to understanding and addressing cultural tourism and promote the development of disadvantaged areas. It explores emerging forms of cultural tourism, identifying opportunities and developing strategies to allow locals to benefit from their precious cultural assets. SPOT engages academics and stakeholders in the development of policy proposals and generalises lessons learned through an Innovation Tool to assist policymakers and practitioners. Case studies from 15 countries are under examination in the period from 2020-2022. The project contributes to deepening the understanding of the specificities of European cultural regions.

1. Strengthening the region through tourism

The region faces challenges that require concerted action to overcome. There is a lack of suitable infrastructure for mobile network coverage, cycling and public transport. There is an unmet demand for gastronomy and a desire for a shared vision for future development.

Soft tourism for sustainable regional development may include a vision, which incorporates previous ideas from Leichhardt Land or the International Nature Exhibition.

Soft tourism for sustainable regional development

The Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BFN) classifies "soft tourism" under the topic of ecotourism. Soft tourism calls for a change in the underlying values of tourism compared to "hard" or mass tourism, which often has negative impacts on the environment and culture both within and outside Europe. Soft tourism entails the idea that tourism regions benefit from tourism in environmental, social, financial and cultural terms (http://web01.bfn.cu.ennit.de/activities/tourism-and-sports/tourism/ecotourism/ecotourism-nature-tourism/?L=1).

In Germany, there is a high demand for sustainable tourism, as the majority of holidaymakers choose their destination based on the possibility to experience nature, which, however, should not be destroyed in the process (http://web01.bfn.cu.ennit.de/activities/tourism-and-sports/tourism/sustainable-tourism-offer/?L=1).

The importance and popularity of sustainable and climate-neutral holiday offers are increasing. Germany generally offers many attractions that enable sustainable tourism activities. These include, for example, visiting vineyards, historic castles and especially destinations that can be reached car-free.

A number of initiatives and policy documents already exist for the development and support of tourism:

- Tourism as an economic factor in Germany: https://www.bmwk.de/Editor/DE/Publications/Tourism/economic-factor-tourism-inGermanyy-long.html
- The economic potential of water tourism in Germany: https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/DE/Publikationen/Tourismus/potenziale-des-wassertourismus-in-deutschland.html
- Tourism Policy Report of the Federal Government: https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/DE/Publikationen/Tourismus/tourismuspolitischer-bericht.html
- Cultural Plan Lusatia: https://www.kulturplan-lausitz.de/downloads/01_Kulturplan_Lausitz_Haupttext.pdf
- ECOTRANS, a European network, combines ecology and economy, and advocates the establishment and promotion of environmentally friendly tourism in Europe: https://www.globalnature.org/35668/Kooperationen/Mitgliedschaften/ECOTRANS/resindex.aspx
- Forum 'anders reisen e.V.': Association for Sustainable Tourism - Committee on Tourism of the German Bundestag on 18 May 2022: https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/895930/e2783f870e0637d43e37326c64d2752a/Stellungnahme_forum-anders-reisen-data.pdf

The SPOT project team conducted a survey that was distributed among tourists and residents in 2020 which resulted in interesting insights about the case study area. We realized through the survey that the importance of the various cultural offerings is assessed somewhat differently by visitors and residents, which statistical tests confirm. The most important differences here are:

- Gastronomy and historical sites, but also cultural paths and trails are seen as important for the region, while locals rate their importance even higher,
- Town and village ensembles, as well as cultural heritage sites, are valuable for both groups, but here, the appreciation among tourists is somewhat higher,
- Festivals, art galleries, sports, music and dance events are definitely interesting for the inhabitants, but tend to be considered less important by tourists,
- Museums are more appreciated by residents than by visitors.

The majority of the inhabitants welcome tourism in the area and see the potential to also preserve local traditions and contribute to positive future development. We see this as positive and important in gaining support for tourism initiatives (including the SPOT project) as well as the committed policy for further tourism development.

Residents and visitors alike see the scenic attractions such as nature, silence, clean air, the clear starry sky as well as the forests, lakes and rivers as special assets of the region. Elements of high culture are still rare among the reasons for appreciation. Upgrading of the cultural offerings in the area should, therefore, start with the existing potentials, i.e. the attractions of scenery, and take into account that cultural development also does not violate natural values.

Cultural tourism could be improved via the future development of the "only desert in Germany". There is a possibility of developing a unique wilderness landscape here, of which there are hardly any examples in Germany. However, tourism development should take place in a way that is sensitive tourism –toward natural areas and their protection, without destroying these treasures. Which is plausible related to the expressed needs of tourists and the positive relationship between them and the inhabitants. The make up of the overnight accommodations in the area (family owned and operated holiday flats and campsites, rarely large hotels) offer the best conditions for protection of natural areas.

Identified weaknesses relate mainly to current infrastructural. For example, here is a lack of safe paths for cyclists and pedestrians as well as proper signposting of the already existing routes.

Kulturtourismus im ländlichen Raum

Ergebnisse einer Besucher- und Einwohnerbefragung im Amtsbereich Lieberose / Oberspreewald (Brandenburg) im Corona-Jahr 2020

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Survey results

The brochure (shown here on the left, is only available in German) with the survey results can be read in full and downloaded from the following URL:
https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/74386#

More tourism would be

very positive — 25,9%
positive — 36,5%
neutral — 28,2%
negative — 9,4%

... for the region.
85 answers
© IÖR 2021
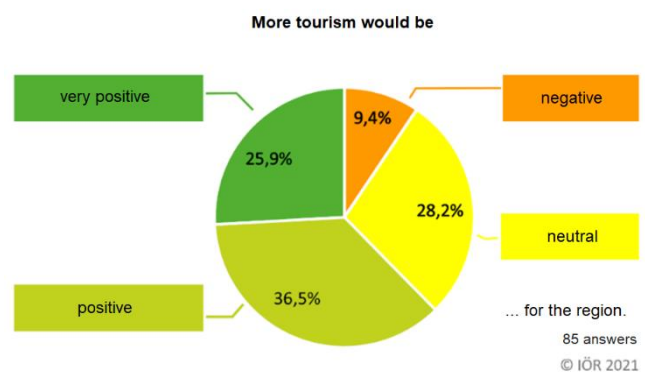
A clear trend during the Corona pandemic was the preference for taking holidays in one's own country versus long-distance travel. Many tourists discovered this area for the first time in 2020. Even after the end of the pandemic, stronger domestic tourism can be expected to continue, because the discoveries "wet the appetite for more" and increasing awareness of climate protection and perhaps awakened a thirst for adventure are likely to continue. It is recommended that the persons responsible within the case study areas further develop the urgently desired infrastructure and, above all, create more and improved gastronomy such as vegan, fresh, local, etc. dishes. Furthermore, the extension of opening hours should take place.

2. Tools for improving tourism

Within the SPOT project competition was launched for the best description of the region among the 15 partners. Below this text, you can see the **website** for the German competition entry. The new and funny illustrations are designed to encourage curiosity about the region and to increase the visibility of the region. The illustration of a man is intended to portray Ludwig Leichhardt, a German explorer that travelled to Australia for his research. The kangaroo is also related to Leichhardt the explorer. The pickle and jar of pickles represent a beloved product of the region. By asking „what does a kangaroo want with a pickle?" We are attempting to capture the interest of tourists in the region and perhaps spark interest in getting to the bottom of this not-very-serious question. The purpose of the various illustrations is to provide a light and happy atmosphere and to put the potential tourist in a mindset of adventure.

Ideas for an international advertisement campagn connecting „outback" (relation to the well-known Australia's explorer Ludwig Leichhardt) with shortcomings that are taken as adventages in a funny way (desert, wilderness, no signal).

What does a KANGAROO want with a PICKLE?

Culture?
– Manifold.

Special engineering, visual arts amazing architecture, unique traditions and events among others from Sorbian minority.

Animals?
– Wild.

Beavers shape the landscape, since the otters, Spreewald's emblem animals, are hidden! But of course, the wolf is the king of terrestrial wilderness.

Desert?
– Dry.

The Lieberoser Heide is too dry to become a dense forest once again. Special paths and a lookout hill allow one to experience the heathland.

The **"SPOT-IT" tool** is an innovative web-map application, which will be available to all stakeholders, investors, government and municipal officials and the general public. The main objective of this tool is to provide decision support for the development of attractions and infrastructure in disadvantaged or remote areas to strengthen economic and social sustainability. The purpose of this application is to identify preferred areas for additional tourism development, but also to push for increased sustainability if excessive tourism has taken place in the past.
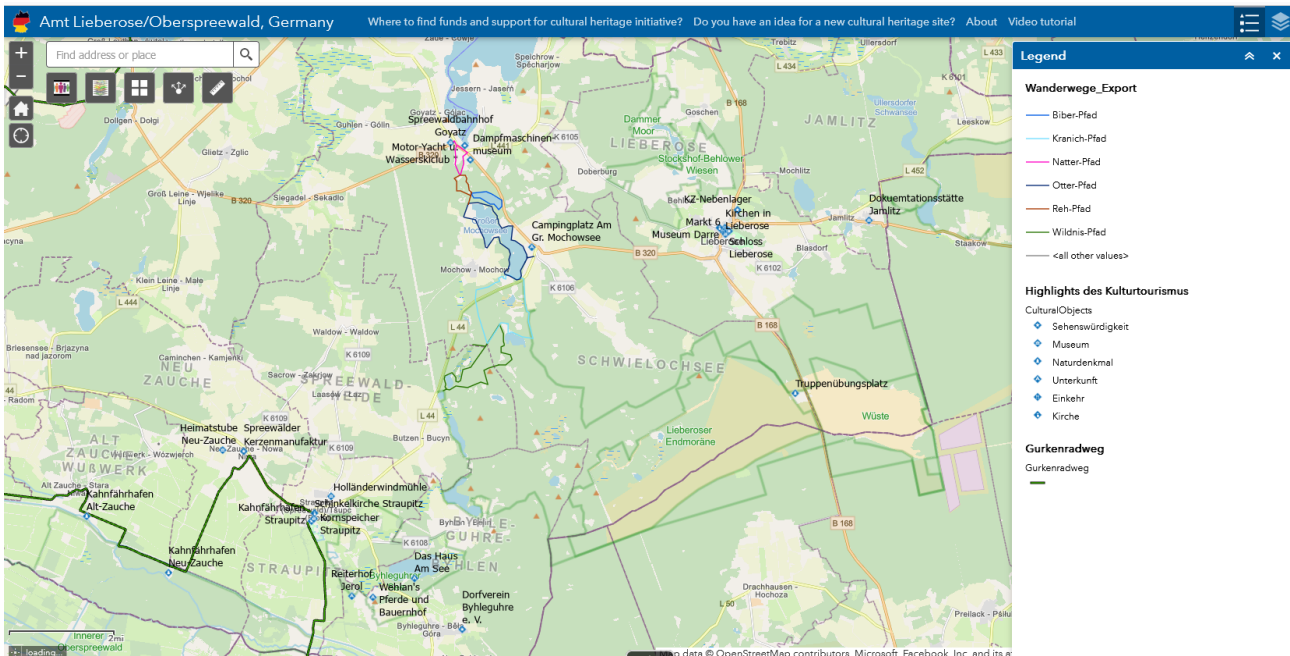
Screenshot: New **SPOT-IT** web application for **the Lieberose/Oberspreewald administrative district**

3. Conclusion and policy recommendations

The transportation infrastructure in the area, which is often criticised, is partly decided outside the region and can, therefore, only be influenced to a limited extent at the local level. The area is located far away from supra-regional traffic routes and highways, which has advantages in terms of noise or pollution but also leads to poor accessibility, especially for people who do not have a car. Associated advantages (silence, undisturbed nature, limited air and light pollution) should be used and advertised more; at the same time, it is important to decisively improve accessibility for all types of transport, but especially for sustainable (soft) transport, and to advocate for this at all political levels.

From state government to the EU, **green sustainable tourism** is **particularly promoted.** This results in opportunities for the development of infrastructure and sustainable transport solutions, such as local buses, rental bicycles or electric scooters, which should be purchased.

For the further development of tourism, it is important for the district to record the existing visions in an action plan that sets priorities in the medium term, i.e. for the next 2 to 3 years, on which the different actors can work together. This action plan must, of course, first be discussed and later continuously updated. This requires regular meetings of the most important actors from culture, sport, tourism, the municipalities and localities, associations and all interested service providers, which should take place at least every six months. For the organisation of these meetings, the implementation of the action plan and for the continued motivation of all those involved, a management team with representatives from the interest groups (culture, sport, tourism, monument protection, customs preservation, local and municipal councils, etc.) is needed.

A good starting point is to use the action plan to pursue the **development of sustainable communities and of soft tourism.** This would allow the supposed disadvantages of the area (little traffic, low radio coverage, low light pollution, silence, rare animals and plants, free development of natural processes) to be presented as advantages and, where desired, preserved. Such soft tourism offers are primarily aimed at older people, adventurers, and families with children as well as school classes.

We recommend developing special offers, not only to address the appropriate group of visitors but also to specifically extend the strong seasonal occupancy into the low season, these include:
1.   school trips, youth dedication trips, class reunions, hiking group trips
2.   bird watching and other wildlife observation (birdwatch tourism)
3.   training camps, events and competitions for everyday athletes
4.   offers and training for stargazing
5.   retreats with water recreation, yoga, mindfulness or nutrition seminars and "digital detox".
6.   gourmet offers such as slow food, wine tastings (outdoors) or similar.
7.   offers of film and literary history such as a trail of legends or plot locations of famous series.

Of course, the essential **equipment and infrastructures have** to be created or (if they already exist somewhere) bundled for this: Catering and overnight accommodation for groups, sports offers and courses for beginners, sufficient rental equipment (boats, binoculars, yoga mats or sports equipment for rent, outdoor furniture). It is important to develop the necessary infrastructure in the long term; for sustainability and integration, these are public transport, footpaths and cycle paths with a smooth surface (asphalt instead of pavement or sand), picnic areas and protected storage facilities for own equipment; for young and modern target groups, these would be above all public WIFI hotspots, charging possibilities and good internet information offers about the events and operating times in the area. It is also important to ensure a suitable atmosphere, i.e. to recognise and avoid negative influences at an early stage while ensuring peaceful collaboration.

For successful positive development, harmony between residents and tourists is particularly important. As the district was praised several times in the survey for the good atmosphere and friendly behaviour of the locals, it is important to maintain this positive atmosphere. This requires coexistence and respect in all public debates and attention to the local opportunities of any tourist or cultural activity. It includes the involvement of residents, earning opportunities for local companies, tolerance and broad consultation for all activities.

Project Identity

Project name	Social and innovative Platform on Cultural Tourism and its potential towards deepening Europeanisation (SPOT)
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8

A cross-border cultural tourism destination: the possibility of levelling up through cooperation

For local, regional and national policymakers

Author: CERS team

Introduction

In Europe, there are many examples of cross-border regions and by fostering greater cohesion between states, the European Union aims to transform dividing borders into connecting ones, encouraging regions to increase the frequency and intensity of cross-border interactions in order to address the existing ethnic and cultural fragmentation. As strengthening the cohesion of cross-border destinations, and intensifying cooperation in cross-border tourism development is considered to be an essential condition for creating a common European identity, in our research we take the cross-border region of Komárom/Komarno as a study region and look at the success and limiting factors for strengthening cohesion between cross-border destinations in the area and at the same time look examples aiming to strengthen cohesion between cross-border cultural tourism destinations in the case study region and other cross-border regions of Europe. By looking at good examples, analysing their applicability and upscaling it is possible to explain which factors could strengthen cooperation in cross-border cultural tourism destinations.

The **cross-border twin city of Komárom/Komarno**, which is located on each side of the Danube between Slovakia and Hungary, is one example that is currently being examined in the SPOT project. The region has a rich archeological and historical heritage because it has been inhabited from the oldest ages and was a crucial part of the Limes that protected the Roman Empire from barbarian invaders.

The Peace Treaty of Trianon in 1920 dissolved the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the newly established state of Czechoslovakia was rewarded with the former Upper Hungary, present-day Slovakia. The Danube became a state border between the newly established Czechoslovakia and Hungary and the town of Komárom became separated. The southern part named as Komárom stayed part of Hungary and the northern part, by its new name Komárno became part of Slovakia. Komárno was deprived from its urban status and lost its economic hinterland.

In 1939, following the Vienna Arbitration of 1938 Czechoslovakia gave back nearly 12 thousand km^2 and more than 1 million inhabitants (84% of them were Hungarian) to Hungary, but after the Second World War Komárom was divided again between Hungary and Czechoslovakia. During the communist era, differences grew further and there was border control between the twin-city. From that, relations stabilized and by the end of the 20th century, Komárom-Komárno had evolved into a city pair from its beginnings as a bridge town on the northern bank of the Danube.

The cross-border twin city attracts a high number of visitors. Based on estimates by Komárom TDM, tourists spend on average 90,000 tourist nights there. They are officially **two separate destinations, but the two sides offer a number of parallel and complementary tourism element**s and there is considerable movement between them besides the traditional motivations related to tourism eg. citizens visiting the other side's facilities (cinema, theatre, spa, museum, etc). This is officially considered **"international" tourism, but it takes place in the same local spac**e. For each of these groups, a distinction can be made between Hungarian and Slovak nationalities. The number of classic international tourists is still low.
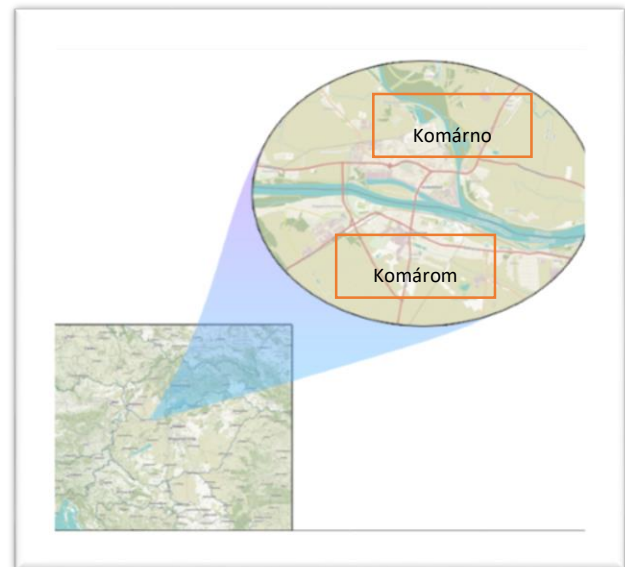
1. Evidence and Analysis

Based on our research conducted in the fall of 2022, we can conclude that tourists seek out the twin-city attractions for a variety of reasons. There is also a subset of visitors who come to Komárom primarily to see the historical and archaeological sites. According to our research, they are mostly Hungarians from Hungary and residents of Slovakia who are interested in their ancestors' history. It is also obvious that the most popular historical sites are on the Hungarian side. **Komárom's cultural offering** is primarily comprised of historical structures, with **the Fortification System** serving as its focal point. The Old and New Fortresses resisted the largest armies of the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg troops in 1849, during the Hungarian independence war. The most visited and renovated parts are found in Komárom. Meanwhile, **in Komárno, a more active form of cultural tourism** is popular, with festivals and theatre at its core. In Komárno, the Fortification System is largely unrenovated and because of that most of its parts in Slovakia cannot be visited.

Citizens of Komarno have a different perspective on culture than citizens of Komárom; events associated with "high culture" are not as popular among citizens as mainstream festivals. Although Komárom and

Komarno have well-established local and regional tourism institutions, the majority of their **operations are independent. The major attractions are developed independently and managed by the state**. There has been a noticeable upturn in culture in Komárom due to significant public investment, but there have been **no significant cultural investments in Komarno. Komarno's cultural life is based primarily on civic associations** and a few prominent local figures, with no significant support from the central government. Jókai and Lehár's memories have enormous potential, but they are largely untapped. Development in Komárno is not dependent on local will, but rather on a central will that does not favor the region. As a result, the **majority of developments rely on EU fundin**g, such as Interreg. Nitra District has a Tourism Destination Management Organization that brings together local Tourism Destination Management Organizations (which was newly formed in 2021). While there are hopes that the **District Tourism Destination Management Organization will provide opportunities to pool resources**, it is seen as a highly politicized organization. In its planning, the Hungarian Tourism Agency considers **Komárom to be a part of Budapest and its surroundings, as well as a part of the Danube Bend**. The Agency sees the city as a **transit zone**, with highways and railways connecting it to Bratislava, Vienna, and Budapest. As a result, **tourists typically spend 1-2 tourist nights** in Komárom. A major issue is that even if they wanted to spend more time in the city pair, there is **no tourism infrastructure and no adequate or sufficient accommodation. As a result tourists spend their money in other cities and because of that there is no significant local economic benefit from tourism**. As a result, Komárom prioritizes the **development of tourism infrastructure**. Komárno has a classic pedestrian street, which Komárom, the Hungarian part, does not have. Komárno has a well-developed cycle network, which Komárom lacks, so the cycle paths in Komárom are being built out.

Key issues according to the findings of the tourist survey are the **absence of Hungarian labels and titles on the Slovakian side of the case study area, a lack of information, and the deterioration of historic structures**. We should note that this is a common complaint among tourists who visit the areas annexed from Hungary. This criticism is also strange in the case of Komarno, because almost all relevant information is written in Hungarian almost everywhere (too). While tourist-host interactions are viewed positively, the issue of the missing Hungarian-language inscription demonstrates that they are still susceptible to misinterpretation and stereotyping. Local residents do not perceive any disadvantages related to tourism, mainly the industrial park and the resulting traffic problems are the source of dissatisfaction amongst locals in Komárom, Hungary.

> To examine cross-border cultural tourism in the area we conducted research within the framework of the EU-funded SPOT project, which aims to develop a new approach to understanding and addressing cultural tourism. Due to the specificity of the Komárom-Komárno case study area we carried out surveys separately with the help of stakeholders to reach the residents of Komárom and Komárno and the tourists visiting the area. The target population of the residential survey was all persons aged 15 years and older living in Komárom or in Komárno. The target population for the tourists' survey was defined as international and domestic visitors who entered the case study area, regardless of their gender and age.
>
> The total number of residents surveyed is 103, of which 49,51% live in Komárom. Out of the 99 tourist surveys delivered, 92 were born in the case study countries.

Tourists frequently suggested **expanding opportunitie**s, such as adding more tourist programs, sporting events, and festivals. Tourists interviewed in Komárom considered a lack of information and the quality of information to be the most serious issues, but this was a common theme in both samples. According to the findings, the **main barriers to the development of cultural tourism in the area are a lack of tourism marketing skills and experts, as well as a lack of investment in tourism marketing**. Another problem identified is that at the planning level municipal and district **statistics are difficult to obtain**, only county data is available.

Stakeholders emphasize that technically and for tourism the **focus should be on common things and on making the cities into one tourism destination**. They wrote a common strategy 15 years ago, which had the

aim to coordinate common urban planning, but it is outdated and is not really used. **The diversity and complementarity of the cultural offerings of Komárom and Komarno** support our hypothesis that the benefit of their collaboration would be that these **destinations would be more "visible" on an international scale when they were combined.** The completion of integrated tourism and thus the **creation of a new tourism product offered by combining cross-border tourism destinations** is therefore worthwhile in order to grow and sustain their competitiveness on an international scale.

On a daily basis, actors on both sides of the border collaborate, and there are shared goals, such as building electric bus transportation between Komárom and Komárno. A major goal is to **connect the transportation systems** of the two cities. The integration of the Danube into tourism is a priority for both parties. The railway separates Komárom from the city, and the industrial park separates Komárno from the city, but **incorporating boat trips into tourism programs** may provide a good opportunity for integration.

An **EGTC association** (Pons-Danubii) has been set up on a **cross-border basis**, which among its many tasks in the tourism sector, has projects on both sides (e.g. the CULTPLAY project, the joint bicycle network and the operation of the cross-border bicycle rental service Komárom Bike) focusing on strengthening cohesion between destinations on both sides of the river. The association has projects with the goal of increasing the attractiveness of a border region by developing new tourism areas through products and brands based on the shared history.

One of the most successful projects **building on shared history on both sides of the border is the CULTPLAY project**. CULTPLAY stakeholders create **thematic parks that represent the partners' significant cultural heritages, primarily serving as playgrounds** while providing educational information, historical value, and knowledge. The educational materials are available in three languages - Hungarian, Slovak, and English - via a QR code-enabled mobile application. CULTPLAY's main goal is to engage local residents and tourists in new ways of utilizing existing cultural heritage, not only by visiting and passively observing heritage sites, but also by actively participating in and using theme parks. CULTPLAY parks are being built in nine cities (SK: Érsekújvár,

Source: https://egtcmonitor.cesci-net.eu/hu/projektek/cultplay/

Komarno, Gyalla, Guta, Vágsellye, HU: Komárom, Tata, Oroszlány, Kisbér) to showcase cultural heritage on both sides of the Danube. CULTPLAY parks are constructed in each municipality, **with each park focusing on a significant built heritage site (castle, fortress, watermill, mine) of another municipality from the other side of the border in the partnership**. While the cultural heritage of the Slovakian side is built on the Hungarian side, the cultural heritage of the Hungarian side is built on the Slovakian side. Partnership and widespread support for the initiative among local governments are critical success factors. Another factor that contributes to its success is that it **involves new ways of utilizing existing cultural heritage as well as the use of new technology, particularly digital technology, to attract visitors**. Much effort has gone into making these thematic parks important cultural attractions for all generations, as well as promoting new ways of **access to culture for a variety of target groups of tourists and citizens**, but promoting it on an international level would require further cross-border marketing in a form of a campaign.

Another example of u**tilizing existing cultural heritage and finding new ways of use for existing cultural heritage sites** is the restoration of **Star Fortress** and the new exhibition it is hosting. The exhibition of life-like plaster replicas shows some of the finest examples of medieval and Renaissance sculpture. The replicas,

often made after the original works of art, can be studied up close and at eye level for the first time. The exhibition gives an overview of the history of sculpture from Antiquity to the Renaissance, showing the origins and succession of styles and the use of iconographic and representational types and

Source: KRTK, Melinda Smahó

patterns. The exhibition also highlights the ancient connections between medieval and Renaissance monuments, for example by putting the Laocoon group of sculptures and Michelangelo's sculptures in dialogue with art history. **Marketing the uniqueness of Star Fortress and connecting it to other tourism destinations** in Komárom and Komarno as well is an important task for local actors in the area.

As connecting the two cities is an important factor for cohesion between destinations the **KOMBiBike** project's goal is to significantly **improve the interconnectivity of the Komárno-Komárno cross-border region by launching an innovative public transportation system.** It implements a cross-border community bicycle rental system in 9 municipalities (HU-4, SK-5) with 13 stops and the main goal is to **integrate the bicycle rental system into the local public transportation.** The cross-border EGTC association is responsible for the development of
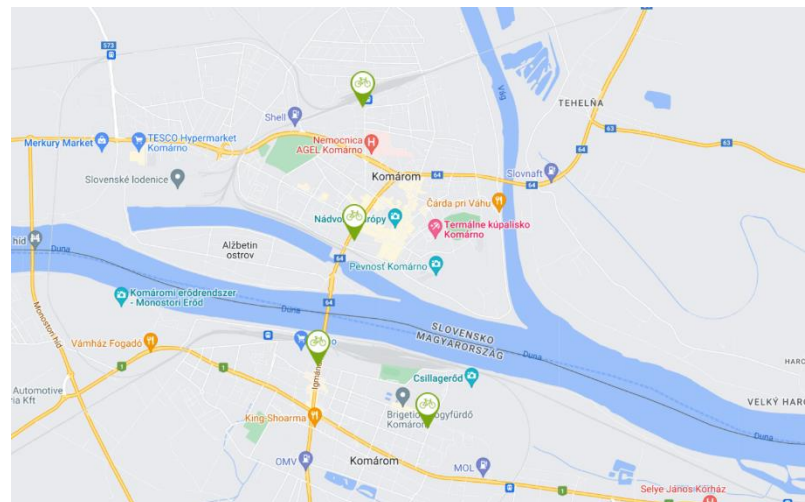
Source: kombibike.eu

infrastructure for cross-border cycling and bike rental: the new car park in Tata's Builders' Park is an excellent place to change modes of transportation and a good starting point for cycling tours. The same is true for the car park that will be built in Naszvad, adjacent to the spa complex that is currently under construction and along the route of a future cycle path connecting Révkomárom and Érsekújvár. Another important is increasing target group awareness of the green transport modes.

1. A good example from Europe is the Lake Constance Tourism Ltd. (https://www.bodensee.eu/de, https://bw.tourismusnetzwerk.info/inhalte/service/ansprechpartner/regionen/internationale-bodensee-tourismus-gmbh/). It is a cross-border tourism organization with shareholders from Germany, Switzerland, France and Liechtenstein in the Lake Constance area. As it is an organization set-up for a long-term cooperation, it covers the fields and functions needed for successful cross-border integration. Through pooling information and managing a platform via which tourist organizations of the destinations/regions and the companies in the tourism sector around Lake Constance cooperate and share information makes cooperation between shareholders efficient. Through the organization regional actors work on projects and issues together and it helps in presenting, representing and communicating Lake Constance as a unified area. Projects managed by the organization are:

- Bodensee Erlebniskarte: it is a Holiday Pass of Lake Constance, an all-inclusive card that offers free access to more than 160 attractions in four countries.
- Lake Constance Gardens: a cross-border network of historical gardens or castles, monasteries with gardens around Lake Constance.
- Wine Region Lake Constance: it is a new cross-border network of wine regions around the lake to establish a cross-border wine region.
- Joint trade fair presentations of Lake Constance
- A Common Sales Guide for Lake Constance
- A common tourism website for the Lake Constance area

2. Euregio Meuse-Rhine (https://youregion-emr.eu/prepare/euregio-meuse-rhine/) is one of the frontrunners in Europe with regard to cultural cooperation. Under the name, Space Collecting People cities in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine are linked by transboundary contemporary art. Since its inception in 2002, it has acquired 107 contemporary pieces from the area. Interactive sculptures are placed in public areas and when a visitor puts money into a SPACE machine, the sculpture comes to life and they are awarded a poetry ticket or a cultural prize. By giving contestants the option to select a cultural gift from Liège or Maastricht or from a neighbouring city, the idea behind the "cultural award" is to promote cultural interchange and the exploration of other people's traditions. The Euregio Meuse-Rhine border triangle is home to 13 locations that participate in the Open Art Sunday network. The partners from the three surrounding nations work in a variety of media, including painting, sculpture, jewellery, recycling art, illustration, and design.

2. Policy Implications and Recommendations

It is essential for integration that the two regions, which currently function separately, **draw up a strategic tourism concept together with a long term orientation and a higher level of institutionalization** eg. under the coordination of the existing EGTC association or a cross-border association set up for this purpose. The attractions in both cities have the potential to put the common destination on the tourism map of Europe. The coordinated development and tourist use of the Fortress System, the Roman heritage theme, the memory of one of the monarchy's most important and popular composers, the involvement of cities under the umbrella of cultural routes such as the Cyril and Methodius Route, and the further enhancement of the Danube's and shipping's tourism importance could all play a role. Together, these could propel the twin cities' tourism to a truly international level, giving them a symbolic reputation, a 'brand,' that would transcend the ethnic divides of the twentieth century.

As data collection is difficult an important task is to **pool information** concerning the cross-border area and its destinations. **Operating a platform** via which tourist organisations, destinations and businesses share information can contribute to effective planning. To keep the integrity, the uniqueness of the local cultures and ensure sustainable local development, **citizens should have the opportunity to channel their ideas and opinions** related to the tourism development of the area as well through consultation and/or joining the platform of developers.

Under the umbrella of the strategy, local actors with national support could launch a number of projects aimed at strengthening cohesion. **Launching cultural routes** similar to the Cyril and Methodius Route, which include cultural heritage sites in both cities through visits to historic sites, as well as providing the necessary infrastructure through **further developing city interconnectivity**, will aid tourist movement in and across the region, contributing to sustainable growth. **Creating common cross-border products** and **carrying out common marketing campaigns, coordinating tours** throughout the area visiting heritage sites in both cities would further enhance the visibility of the area on an international level eg. the memories of Jókai and Lehár have huge potential: creating common products, common larger scale events with government support

related Jókai and Lehár. **The integration of the Danube** into tourism is an important objective on both sides and could further strengthen interconnectivity.

The strategy should also be aimed at facilitating the **development of tourism infrastructure ensuring modern accommodation and catering services** in order for tourists to stay longer than one day within the region. The aim is to provide high quality, safe and affordable tourist services, as well as providing a welcoming environment for visitors. In addition, actors in both cities have to **plan and coordinate their efforts** to ensure that the developments complement each other via communicating the cross-border platform mentioned before.

Addressing issues raised by tourists is important as well, especially the **misinterpretation and stereotyping** found during the tourist surveys conducted. **Educational programs and/or educational trails focusing on shared values** could generate discussion and help to address stereotypes. A joint image and communication, and having marketing materials — such as posters, advertisements and **signs of streets, destinations and tourism infrastructure – available in multiple languages** can solve issues related to missing information.

Project Identity

Project name	Social and innovative Platform on Cultural Tourism and its potential towards deepening Europeanisation (SPOT)
Coordinator	Prof. Milada Šťastná, Ph.D. Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic milada.stastna@mendelu.cz
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8

Cultural tourism and the case study Kinderdijk in the Netherlands

Different narrative perspectives

Authors: Marcel Pleijte, Bas Pedroli and Eline van Elburg (Wageningen Research, WUR, NL)

Introduction

Kinderdijk and the surrounding areas were subjects of a case study for the EU-funded SPOT project about Cultural Tourism during 2020-2022. For those who are not familiar with Kinderdijk in the Netherlands as World Heritage, a short explanation follows. The Kinderdijk windmills are nineteen windmills ("poldermolens", age-old windmills pumping water from a polder into the surrounding ring canal) in Kinderdijk, a village which is part of municipality Molenlanden in the northwest of the polder of Alblasserwaard, a region in the Dutch province of South Holland. UNESCO added the Kinderdijk windmills to the World Heritage List in 1997 (https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/818). According to UNESCO, the outstanding contribution made by the people of the Netherlands to the technology of handling water is admirably demonstrated by the installations in the Kinderdijk area. There are several opportunities to frame the case of Kinderdijk with various aspects of cultural tourism.

In this policy brief the most important results are shown for narratives around three topics: 1) width of definition of cultural tourism, 2) regions around Kinderdijk and 3) different time perspectives.

1. Evidence and Analysis

Interviews were conducted in 2021 with key stakeholders. These interviews took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns were intermittent, which certainly affected the findings. A document analysis about the case study completed findings.

Photo 1 and 2: Interview with stakeholders on 24-09-2022 (Marcel Pleijte).

1.1. Width of definition of cultural tourism

The Kinderdijk World Heritage site is based on the cultural heritage of age-old drainage systems of low-lying agricultural lands, for which the use of a series of iconic windmills as pumping units has been essential. What is special about Kinderdijk World Heritage is that the mills in the area are inhabited by culture bearers par excellence, the millers and their families.

However, many respondents emphasise that cultural heritage is a comprehensive concept, which can be understood in this area from the necessary attention to land use, climate adaptation, biodiversity, landscape quality and socio-cultural traditions. According to the Kinderdijk Steering Committee (2019: p. 15), the ambitions and the necessary measures therefore not only relate to the area of the Kinderdijk World Heritage (the 'site'), but extend over the immediately surrounding area to far beyond, covering various areas of interest (spatial planning, flood risk management, biodiversity, tourism, economy, transport).

The stakeholders differ in opinion on the extent to which this comprehensiveness actually receives the necessary attention that according to some it deserves and according to some it does not. While one regional stakeholder sees climate adaptation as the rescue to prevent the world heritage from vanishing, another stakeholder has doubts aloud whether tourists should also be told the story of climate adaptation. It is also noted in the literature that cultural tourism as a concept is still broadening. Are there limits to broadening or multiple images and stories about tourist icons for branding and marketing to tourists?

However, there must be focus and attention to different target groups that can be distinguished. The comprehensiveness cannot be ignored. The ambition of the area perspective for the Future of the Kinderdijk World Heritage and the Advice on the Future of Kinderdijk (Kinderdijk Steering Group, 2019: p.5) is: "to combine the development of the UNESCO World Heritage and increasing tourism with improving the quality of life, preserving the experience, peace and space and enhancing nature."

1.2. Width of regional perspectives

The polder area of which Kinderdijk has always been an essential part (while tourists just focussed on the photogenic row of windmills) and is now subject of a Regional Green Deal. This makes the entire polder area a unit to be considered in the land use, water management and biodiversity, instead of only the lowest part where the waters of the entire polder were drained towards the sea.

This relates to the framing of Kinderdijk as part of:

1. The Water Triangle (as part of a provincial policy), includes the historical city of Dordrecht and National Park Biesbosch, where Biesbosch is over-touristed as well, and no direct cultural-heritage-relationship is present. The Water Triangle is rather a 'heritage line' and is formed by World Heritage Kinderdijk, the Biesbosch and the Drechtsteden. The term 'heritage line' means that there are monumental places in this area and that they have a shared history . The Triangle consists of the Oude Maas, Merwede and Noord and their banks and dikes, mills and pumping stations, osier-beds, duck decoys and shipyards. The Water Triangle is the blue-green heart of the Dutch Delta and is known worldwide for its windmills and shipyards. The water in this region is the connection between iconic places, which tourists also like to photograph. Every year the Province makes money available to improve the Water Triangle and make it more attractive for residents and tourists.

Map 1: Watertriangle: Kinderdijk (above), historical city of Dordrecht (bottom left side) and National Park De Biesbosch (bottomright side) (source: Municipality of Alblasserdam, 2013. Structure Vision Alblasserdam 2040).

2.   A landscape for roaming around in the Alblasserwaard/Vijfheerenlanden as a whole, forming the basis of the drainage system at Kinderdijk (which is mainly competence of the Waterboard Rivierenland). Key point of framing this is how the Alblasserwaard can be known as the champion of climate adaptation, along with the international charisma of World Heritage Site;
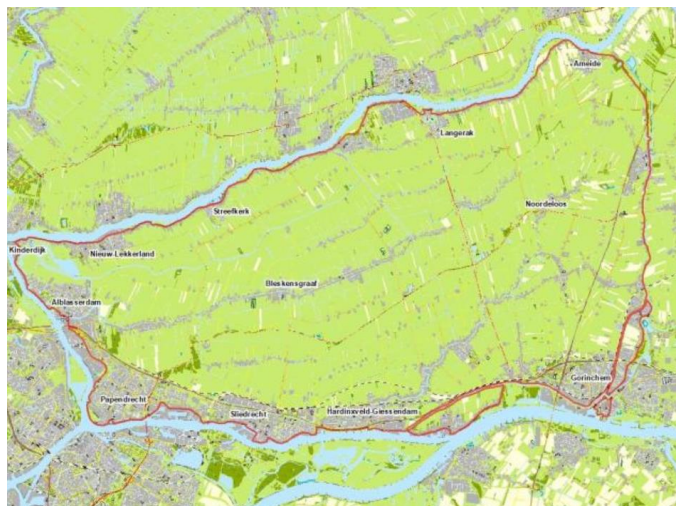
Map 2: The location of the Alblasserwaard area (source: https://www.waterschaprivierenland.nl/peilbesluit-alblasserwaard)

3.   The former military water defence system (based on inundation of the low-lying polders in case of military threat) comprising the fortresses of Gorinchem, Schoonhoven, Nieuwpoort en Woudrichem/Slot Loevestein, of which Kinderdijk formed the most westerly line. The Old Waterline of Holland concerned the area of the Overwaard, which covers a large part of Alblasserwaard/ Vijfheerenlanden, with the exception of the Nederwaard.

Map 3: A part of the Dutch old Waterline with Kinderdijk in the most werstly line (source: Marc Laman/ Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland; https://geschiedenisvanzuidholland.nl/verhalen/verhalen/het-verhaal-van-de-oude-hollandse-waterlinie/).

New framing of the Kinderdijk World Heritage also includes biodiversity: In the new entrance of the Kinderdijk area is a Bird Theatre, presenting 22 important bird species, stressing the high biodiversity value of the area. The biodiversity in the area goes further than the Bird Theatre[1] alone. The "Boezems Kinderdijk" is a Natura2000 area (EU-labelled natural heritage site).

Kinderdijk is seen as an ideal place, as a showcase for climate adaptation. The pumping station at Kinderdijk will soon no longer be able to process the water from the Ablasserwaard and Vijfheerenlanden. The water system as we have known it in the Alblasserwaard since the Middle Ages will change over the next 30 to 40 years. The water system may be reversed: the idea is to add pumping stations at Giessendam and possibly also at Groot Ammers, thereby reversing the drainage system, a procedure practiced in history also at other places, though at a smaller scale.

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[1] The Bird Theatre is part of the Kinderdijk World Heritage site offering an introduction to the birdlife in the area.

Also, due to the growing interest in river cruises all over Europe, shipping companies are looking for new destinations, especially after COVID-19. The south-west of the Netherlands is very interesting, precisely because of the combination of city and nature, and the opportunity to get acquainted with a nice network of historical trade and maritime connections, including the central role of Dordrecht also for the polder Alblasserwaard. Interestingly, as from 2022 new concessions will be granted for the water bus network.

According to the stakeholders, in the formulation of a Regional Climate Adaptation strategy, the Waterboard Rivierenland (regional public authority responsible for water management, in which farmers and other residents have important democratic stakes) still has difficulties in defining integrative strategies. Apparently the interests of the farmers, especially in the polder Alblasserwaard/Vijfheerenlanden, are relatively dominant in the area. Also, the Waterboard has hardly succeeded to promote cultural heritage values in its policies, although Kinderdijk does tell the story of the Waterboard by excellence.

The municipal authorities have a policy to promote quality tourism. This goes as far as buying out souvenir shops and low quality catering offers that do not have a link with local identity. Also one-time tourists do appreciate quality service! The municipality is not requested to subsidise structurally the World Heritage Site, maintenance of the mills should be covered by the Province and the State.

1.3.   Width of time perspectives: past, present and future

Construction of hydraulic works for the drainage of land for agriculture and settlement began in the Middle Ages and has continued uninterruptedly to the present day. The site illustrates all the typical features associated with this technology – dykes, reservoirs, pumping stations, administrative buildings and a series of beautifully preserved windmills.

Kinderdijk World Heritage originated from the water management of the entire Alblasserwaard. In the area it is uniquely visible how in different periods in history the inhabitants waged their battle against the water. The technology that was and is necessary for this is still visible. All developments in and around the Alblasserwaard area must therefore always fit within the requirements of water management for which the water board is responsible (see also Kinderdijk Steering Group, 2019: p.5). The story of UNESCO World Heritage Kinderdijk is about 750 years of living with water. This story is about the most important turning points in life with water: then, now and tomorrow. With 750 years of water management experience, there appear to be many lessons to be learned for the future of our country and for low countries in the rest of the world. The windmill area in Kinderdijk shows the Dutch water management system in all its facets: the polders and boezems (canals for discharging the pumped water to the sea) from the early Middle Ages, 18th century windmills, ultramodern pumping stations and robust, sturdy 21st century dikes. All these elements are visible in one view!

The Kinderdijk Steering Group (2019: p. 7) uses a number of principles for the story of Kinderdijk. The Steering Committee positions Kinderdijk as an international icon, with an international allure; the beauty of the World Heritage and the natural environment is displayed with pride and conviction. The steering group positions Kinderdijk as part of a unique and historic water management system that encompasses the entire Alblasserwaard and the Dutch Delta and that establishes the link between the past, present and future of Dutch water management. It includes the culture and authenticity of the Alblasserwaard: religious people who value Sunday's rest, hard work, struggle for existence, living with water. The Steering Committee assumes that the majority of the mills are inhabited by millers and their families. This unique fact will become an important part of Kinderdijk's story. The Steering group sees the following *future developments:*

- The extent to which a relationship with stories of the other water-related world heritage sites in our country can offer added value for Kinderdijk is being examined.

- As part of the elaboration of the story, it has also been suggested to investigate the added value of granting the entire Alblasserwaard water system with the associated polder mills a separate status, for example in the form of a National Park. It should be noted that any separate status does not constitute an obstacle to future water management. The suggestion is also taken into account to investigate the possibilities of obtaining the UNESCO Global Geopark status for the area.

- Developments in the immediate vicinity of the world heritage can become part of that story and contribute to strengthening the spatial quality. These are, for example, developments in the Water Triangle (Biesbosch, Dordrecht; where the Biesbosch is also over-touristy and there is no direct cultural-heritage relationship with Kinderdijk);

For the Kinderdijk Steering Group (2019, p. 8) further elaboration of the story has less urgency than taking measures to direct the visitor flows and protect the liveability of the mill area and the residential hamlets.

Photo 3 and 4: Lighting week at Kinderdijk on 11-09-2021 (Marcel Pleijte).

2. Policy Implications and Recommendations

According to many stakeholders, the width of the narrative of Kinderdijk has not yet received the attention it deserves. Different aspects should also be related to each other and not be approached separately (integrity). In addition, cultural tourism is not something static, but something dynamic.

One would wish a change in narrative:

1.   from only windmills as World Heritage to broader storytelling around Kinderdijk, focussing on climate adaptation and biodiversity. The measures apply to the entire Alblasserwaard-Vijfheerenlanden, of which Kinderdijk is a part. Measures in the "Boezems Kinderdijk" Natura2000 area are part of this.

In addition, additional nature and landscape measures are needed, such as protection of the reed landscape against goose foraging. So this narrative can be combined with a timeline in future. Available area knowledge can be used even better in this regard. At present, use is mainly made of the knowledge of national knowledge institutes. Many stakeholders plead for broader storytelling

and better engagement of the Waterboard Rivierenland and for a regional revenue model for maintenance and management of nature and landscape.

2.   from mass tourism to quality tourism (a) by directing flows: parking permits, river cruises etc, (b) by upgrading the branding of the area: offering more service in accommodation, catering and souvenir shops, allowing at the same time for spreading of the tourism pressure.

3)   from tourism icons in the Water Triangle (Kinderdijk/Biesbosch and Dordrecht) to a historical water system and ecosystem approach based on the Alblasserwaard-Vijfheerenlanden polders.

It is suggested to create narratives with a multi-sector approach, a multi-time line approach and a multi-area approach, and take the suggestion into account to investigate in possibilities of obtaining the UNESCO Global Geopark status for the area. Continued monitoring and evaluation are needed and new policies should be developed regularly. Further, for an integrated approach to cultural tourism it is crucial to focus and anticipate on the different target groups that can be distinguished.

Photo 5: Ice skating at Kinderdijk on 13-02-2021 (Marcel Pleijte).

Project Identity

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8

NETHERLANDS

PolicyBRIEF

Cultural tourism and the case of Kinderdijk in the Netherlands

On the road to quality tourism

Authors: Marcel Pleijte, Bas Pedroli and Eline van Elburg (Wageningen Research, WUR, NL)

Introduction

Kinderdijk and the surrounding areas were subjects of a case study for the EU-funded SPOT project about Cultural Tourism during 2020-2022. The Kinderdijk windmills are nineteen windmills ("poldermolens", age-old windmills pumping water from a polder into the surrounding ring canal) in Kinderdijk, a village which is part of municipality Molenlanden in the northwest of the polder of Alblasserwaard, a region in the Dutch province of South Holland. UNESCO added the Kinderdijk windmills to the World Heritage List in 1997 (https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/818). According to UNESCO, the outstanding contribution made by the people of the Netherlands to the technology of handling water is admirably demonstrated by the installations in the Kinderdijk area. This policy brief focuses on quality tourism (as opposed to mass tourism although there is a certain overlap). To reach quality tourism we take into account policy formation, local engagement, presence of a shared vision on development of tourism, sustainable development and green agenda, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. At the end we also look how they manage the effects of COVID-19.

1. Evidence and Analysis

Interviews were conducted in 2021 with key stakeholders. These interviews took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns were intermittent, which certainly affected the findings. A document analysis about the case study completed the findings.

Photo 1 and 2: UNESCO World Heritage Kinderdijk in different languages: Dutch, English and Chinese (Marcel Pleijte, 11-09-2020)

1.1. Policy formation

Under the leadership of the Kinderdijk Steering Group, an Area Perspective for Kinderdijk up to 2030 was developed in 2019. The World Heritage Kinderdijk Foundation (SWEK), the municipalities of Alblasserdam and Molenlanden, the Rivierenland Water Board, the Cultural Heritage Agency and the province of South Holland work together in this steering group. In policy-making, the Kinderdijk Steering Group focuses on quality tourism along four lines:

1. the experience that the Kinderdijk Steering Committee wants to offer visitors to the World Heritage (see the other policy brief: different narratives about Kinderdijk),

2. the way in which the Kinderdijk Steering Group will protect the quality of life in the World Heritage and the villages. Consideration is being given to instruments such as the introduction of a parking permit and the use of instruments to prevent undesirable developments in the field of habitation, commerce, spatial planning, transport by road, water and air (e.g. drones),

3. the way in which the Kinderdijk Steering Committee will guide the visitor flows: all visitors' cars (including campervans) will be directed to the edges of the site and visitors will be transported to the main entrance via organised transport (shuttles, boat, bus); transport over the river is preferred in order to minimise the traffic of visitors over the dike ribbon; group transport (boat, bus, bicycle, etc.) is registered and scheduled in advance and enters the area through the main entrance.

4. the way in which the Kinderdijk Steering Group ensures that the various parties continue to work together effectively and jointly govern, so that the area is managed as one unit. More influence on the state of affairs at the Kinderdijk World Heritage Foundation, that has been the wish of the municipalities of Alblasserdam and Molenlanden for several years now. They wanted to achieve this, among other things, with a quality seat

for residents of the village Kinderdijk on the Supervisory Board. The director of SWEK was not in favour of this and pointed to the Kinderdijk Administrative Platform as the place where all parties involved can contribute. The outcome is that the wishes of the Supervisory Board are fulfilled. The Administrative Platform is the place for the parties involved in Kinderdijk to discuss matters and exert influence; the autonomy of the parties involved remains unchanged. An advice from a private consultancy bureau (JBR) states that the bureau has convinced the parties of the need to make adjustments in the relationship between the parties, including with regard to the role of the Kinderdijk Administrative Platform. Despite adjustments based on the advice of the JBR agency, the Kinderdijk World Heritage Foundation (SWEK) continues to operate independently. Advice from the municipalities, among others, is possible via the Kinderdijk Administrative Platform, but these will not be binding. That is the attitude of SWEK's board and Supervisory Board. SWEK wants to be more transparent about budget and appointments on the Supervisory Board. According to SWEK, JBR bureau suggests that SWEK is working purely for its own interests, but actually it is UNESCO that sets conditions for a site manager of World Heritage.

1.2. Local engagement and local benefit

The lacking interest of regional people (outside Kinderdijk) to engage in tourism is one of the main challenges in developing quality tourism in the area. The dominant occupation in the area is farming, based on a strong and strict religious tradition, requiring absolute Sunday's rest, and generally not particularly welcoming. This seems also the reason that very few B&B's, campsites and restaurants are present in the area of Kinderdijk and of the Alblasserwaard polder as a whole. And, as a matter of fact, this conformist tradition is also relatively strong in the Waterboard.

1.3. Shared vision

Given the conformist tradition in the polder Alblasserwaard / Vijfheerenlanden on the one hand, and the increasing awareness of a need for transition on the other, it is clear that a certain dichotomy in future visions exists in the area. Recent discussions about the Regional Climate Adaptation Strategy, about nitrogen emissions, and about the energy transition show these differences in vision.

This also makes it a special challenge for SWEK to engage with the width of different opinions of the local population. If the result is that for properly managing the Kinderdijk World Heritage Site there is need for income from more tourists (as part of the business model of SWEK) then the dichotomy in attitudes will only get sharper. Till now the development is away from mass tourism and towards more regulation. Water transport of the tourist streams has priority.

Tourism as a resource cannot mean that the heritage values of the area are sacrificed to the experience of tourists. If tourism turns into a goal (the experience of tourists comes first), then tourism becomes an ailment. Kinderdijk World Heritage wants to be supported in its ambition to be an example of Quality Tourism. The local authorities are well aware of the challenge and organise special participative trajectories for this purpose directed by a joint governance board (Bestuurlijk Platform Kinderdijk, since 2019).

As a shared vision, however, it seems that nobody wants the trend of sky-high-development of international tourism to enter Kinderdijk and the surrounding polder, that is foreseen in a business-as-usual scenario: 1½ - 2 million visitors per year in 2030 compared to 750,000 in 2019. Half a million paying visitors that contribute to the value of the area would already be excellent according to SWEK.

1.4. Sustainable development and Green Agenda

Many project proposals to foster sustainable development of the area have been submitted to national and EU funds, but there is a lack of money (less so for agriculture as such). Very often substantial amounts of co-financing are required, which is problematic. Some subsidies have been acquired for nature education in secondary schools. Perhaps the Province (Zuid-Holland) could help out there. Also the EU Leader-programme offers opportunities, e.g. for focusing on sustainable sailing, building, and small-scale photo-voltaic installations (wind turbines seem to be less acceptable in this area).

1.5. Implementation

Implementation of integrated solutions for the problems encountered around the management of the World Heritage Site Kinderdijk is complicated by problems in mutual understanding of the various groups of stakeholders. Local authorities are working on this issue, in consultation with SWEK and other stakeholder groups. Until now it has not really been customary to involve the inhabitants of the mill area in planning and policy visions. The latest Area Vision (2019) is the first in which the voice of the mill residents can also be heard.

Doing well means according to residents that there is attention to interests of residents in the area (mill residents) and around the area (the village of Kinderdijk and Alblasserdam, Lekkerland West). That the statement in the residents' Covenant about involving each other at an early stage is fulfilled.

According to a mill resident, SWEK has to be more involved in local affairs by the area. Now the impression has at least been created that the area is at the service of the SWEK. Kinderdijk World Heritage is a valuable heritage that should be preserved in all its facets. The liveability of the residents should also be protected against intrusive behaviour of the visitors. "Inhabitation of the mills is an essential part of the World Heritage" (Residents' Covenant 2017).

1.6. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is currently done in two ways: 1) separately by organisations; 2) jointly based on the objectives defined in, for example, the area perspective (2019). There is still too little data on paying vs. non-paying visitors. SWEK only has the paying visitors in the picture. If cultural heritage is a comprehensive concept that can only be understood in this area from the necessary attention to land use, climate adaptation, biodiversity, landscape quality and socio-cultural traditions, then this should also be monitored and evaluated and policy for the future should be adapted accordingly.

1.7.   Effects of COVID-19

The Corona restrictions have caused a dramatic decrease of visits in 2020 and 2021, especially among international tourists. Before COVID-19 restrictions were issued, visitors came from all over the world. Big cruise ships ceased to visit Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and also river cruises did not visit the area in 2020 and 2021 anymore, which together almost nullified the number of group tourists. The World Heritage area as such has remained publicly accessible, but also domestic tourism and individual tourists were substantially fewer than before COVID-19. Because of COVID-19 also SWEK budgets for nature and landscape were limited in 2020 and 2021, but the clear intention of SWEK is to engage in this direction as well. The World Heritage site receives subsidies from governments for maintenance of the mills, but these are insufficient to provide for the proper management and maintenance of buildings and immediate surroundings. In total it amounts to less than 5% of the exploitation costs. Approximately 600,000 euros of this is intended for regular maintenance of mills and the area. The rest is costs of the foundation (salaries, development costs, experience, tourism related, etc.). The additional budget (loan) for compensation of the COVID-19 losses should therefore be earned through paying tourists. This has come under heavy pressure due to COVID-19. A three-phase model is envisaged to get well out of the Corona crisis: 1) first making SWEK financially sound. SWEK now has a negative exploitation, which means that even survival is in danger, now that the COVID-19 compensation funds from the government have stopped and the tourism flows from other continents have not yet recovered; 2) ensure that the SWEK can develop a sound business model; 3) think of an supplemental fee of 1 euro per paying visitor to spend for nature and landscape.

Photo 3: Mills in Kinderdijk (Marcel Pleijte, 11-09-2020)

2.   Policy Implications and Recommendations

2.1.   Policy formation

Main opportunities to come away from mass tourism to quality tourism are (a) by directing flows: parking permits, river cruises, etc., and (b) by upgrading the branding of the area: offering more service in accommodation, catering and souvenir shops, allowing at the same time for spreading of the tourism pressure.

When more public and private money would be invested, then a competition could arise in governance, perhaps requiring a gradual shift from SWEK to a new Public Private Partnership. A cooperation agreement and transparency regarding finances should offer parties confidence in such case.

2.2.   Local engagement/ local benefit

Still, given the incentives by the Municipality, and the growing awareness of climate change and biodiversity decrease among residents, it is expected that new entrepreneurs will try and fill the gap to safeguard sustainable development of the polder, including e.g. local products.

2.3.   Shared vision

Foreseen in a business-as-usual scenario: 1½ - 2 million visitors per year in 2030 compared to 750,000 in 2019. Half a million paying visitors that contribute to the value of the area would already be excellent according to SWEK. So when a system could be organised that only paying visitors are welcome then they can work with pre-bookings. After half a million visitors it is full and then visitors are free to return a year later. (It is like booking in Michelin star restaurants with a waiting time of two years).

2.4.   Sustainable development / Green Agenda

The regional stakeholders could try and apply for financial contributions of the EU. The EU is not currently financially contributing to European Heritage. Huge investments are required to change the entrance to the World Heritage: 10 to 20 million €. This mainly concerns buying out and demolishing buildings to create space. Also a lot of money is needed to realise the transition tasks in the larger polder of the Alblasserwaard. Investments are also needed to boost the quality of the tourism offer.

2.5.   Implementation

A Regional Green Deal should be developed under the moderation of a body appointed by the stakeholders in the area. UNESCO and SWEK are strongly related to each other, but it is also an obstacle to involve other residents and governmental organisations more. So with broadening cultural tourism and regions around Kinderdijk a Regional Green Deal can foster the cohesion in the area.

2.6.   Monitoring and evaluation

If cultural heritage is a comprehensive concept that can only be understood in this area from the necessary attention to land use, climate adaptation, biodiversity, landscape quality and socio-cultural traditions, then this should also be monitored and evaluated and policy for the future should be adapted accordingly.

2.7.   Covid 19

What has been learned from the Corona period is working with time slots for visitors. That will definitely be maintained also after Corona as a regulative instrument, although further experience needs to be gained with working with time slots. For example: visiting times for visitors who come on river cruises have now been adjusted so sharply that they no longer have time to linger in Kinderdijk and the environment of the polder Alblasserwaard. Working with time slots for visitors only works for paying visitors. Most part of the area is publicly accessible, and visitors can only be influenced with soft measures. The signatories of the Area Perspective (2019) hope to regulate non-paying visitors through visitor management, among other things by using the parking license instrument, which makes it more difficult for tourists to visit Kinderdijk with their own cars and rental cars. Parking is done elsewhere (cars, camper vans and coaches) combined with shuttle transport. There is an option for visitors to come by public transport. Public transport is mandatory to take people.

The intention is that Kinderdijk will remain a public area, because, for example, it also meets the recreational needs of residents, for which Kinderdijk is part of a larger cycling route in the area. In addition, the area is inhabited. Sixteen of the nineteen mills have a residential destination, for millers and their families. However, for safety reasons, it is being considered to close Kinderdijk if it is too crowded.

Photo 4: Mills in Kinderdijk (Marcel Pleijte, 11-09-2020)

Project Identity

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8

GOOD PRACTICES

PolicyBRIEF
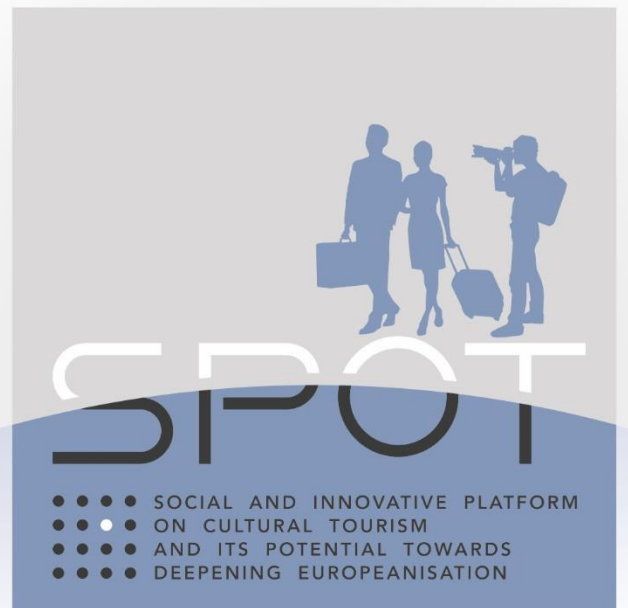
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October 2022 | SPOT Policy Brief #16

Cultural tourism and lessons from good practices across case study regions

Policy Brief relevant for EU, national and regional stakeholders

Authors: Marcel Pleijte, Bas Pedroli and Eline van Elburg (Wageningen Research, WUR, NL)

Introduction

This policy brief discusses lessons learnt from good practices across case study regions in 14 European countries and Israel within the SPOT-project. The SPOT project about cultural tourism studied shifts in culture and in the concepts of cultural tourism, Europeanisation, regional development and local engagement. The good practices are presented in this policy brief on three themes: 1) shifts in culture and broadening of cultural tourism; 2) Europeanisation, sustainability and governance in relation to cultural tourism and 3) regional development and cultural tourism. An inventory of good (and also poor) cultural tourism practices provides transferable relevant knowledge to inspire, learn and innovate in creating good practices elsewhere. General features include the combination of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, the importance of cultural transformation and the economic value of tourism activities as compared to mass tourism.

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1. Evidence and Analysis

This policy brief is based on a report about lessons from good practices (Pleijte et al., 2022) that identifies, documents and discusses a huge wealth of knowledge about Cultural Tourism as gathered in examples of good practice observed during the SPOT project. Because the project almost entirely coincided with the period of societal restrictions because of COVID-19, little field work could be carried out. Instead, the project used the knowledge, experience and expertise of the consortium partners, as much as possible backed up by contacts with local stakeholders, tourists, residents and entrepreneurs, and by document analysis. The collection of the specific information for this policy brief took place during four workshops in 2022 when the COVID-19 rules had been gradually alleviated. All partners contributed to the knowledge gathered, which is documented in the above mentioned report.
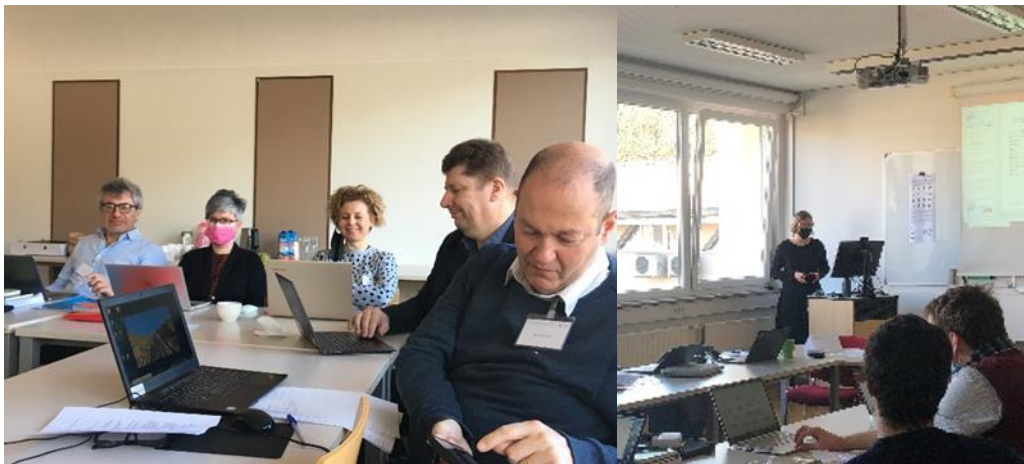
Photos 1 and 2: Covid-19 influences also SPOT project meetings in March2022 (Ljubljana)

1.1. Cultural tourism and a shift in culture

The following key aspects come forward:

- *Cultural transformation.* Acquainting knowledge of the cultural expressions of an area visited is not a static process. The development of cultural capital is a continuous process influenced by socio-economic characteristics, the exchange of experiences between tourists, the local residents and entrepreneurs, and the evolution of local identity and sense of belonging.

- *Changes and transitions in cultural values.* Cultural tourism is also increasingly seen as a business model, which in itself modifies the tourism offer. Local products are created and marketed in case studies, even where the traditional natural and cultural assets are not all valued and protected.

- *Tangible and intangible cultural heritage.* In many cases tangible and intangible cultural heritage are competing for tourists. Cooperation would definitely foster a more complete tourism offer, linking traditions to monuments and landscapes. The offer in intangible cultural heritage is increasing in many of our case studies by a trend to more sustainable and green tourism, including local and regional cuisine and combing cultural heritage with other public attractions. There is a large demand for transferring knowledge, skills and traditions from generation to generation.

- *Creative and interactive cultural tourism.* The restrictions and new boundary conditions posed by COVID-19 and climate change have led to new prospects and creative thinking. Good practices show that creativity comes into cultural tourism in many ways: a totally new product (i.e. festival) can be

developed, but also existing values can be promoted in different ways, including new actors, social media or shared ownership.

- *Digitalisation.* Portals for digital meetings appear to make it much easier for stakeholders to cooperate; however, there is still often a threshold using them. In the tourism offer, in several cases virtual reality glasses, games and QR codes foster imagination, increasing the attractiveness especially for younger tourists. Pre-booking and contactless payment are forms of digitalisation that were increasingly used during the COVID-19 period, which certainly will continue also after COVID.

- *Social media.* Blogging and vlogging both by professionals (influencers, tourist agencies) and by enthusiasts (fans), appear to be powerful marketing means, reaching out to new communities and cementing existing communities.

Photos 3, 4 and 5: Landscapes and art in Buzău Carpathians and Subcarpathians (Romania)

1.2. Europeanisation, sustainability and governance

Europeanisation. Positive effects of political Europeanisation are the possibilities of EU funding, of support for acquiring e.g. a World Heritage status, and harmonised quality standards. Other positive effects of cultural Europeanisation are the international cooperation initiatives around mining traditions, festivals, industrial heritage, development of cultural routes.

On the other hand, negative effects of political Europeanisation are dependency on co-financing, inadequate top down control in tourism planning and management and the risk of over-tourism due to marketing by international tourist entrepreneurs. In several case studies also the increasing dominance of a "European/Western" style of consumption is perceived as negative. This includes threats to local identity and heritage, political issue in border regions, too much bureaucracy and a lack of transparency in subvention schemes.

Regarding more specifically COVID-19: Positive effects of Corona were: development of digital skills and awareness of the own cultural offer within the European context. Often a reorganisation of the tourism management was reported, attracting more domestic tourism and improving accessibility. Negative effects

of COVID-19 were: much less international visitors and different rules between different countries. Harmonisation of COVID-19 rules between the different European countries was extremely poor.

Sustainability. In our observation of good practices in the case studies, a strong demand is reported for integration between cultural tourism and sustainability. However, the discrepancy between expressed intentions and practice is paramount. Generally, stakeholders do hardly think about the relation between cultural tourism and sustainability, perhaps especially not in the hard times of COVID-19 restrictions. Often tourism management is fragmented, with varying interests between economy, environment and culture. It is clear, however, that presenting sustainability issues well, is very much appreciated by increasing numbers of tourists in the cultural sector. Public-private partnership is considered a key to safeguard sustainability in relation to Cultural Tourism. A further issue is education. In many cases it was reported that sustainable (cultural) tourism training and education among (future) tourism professionals could be increased and enhanced.

Governance. Governance issues of cultural tourism should properly be discussed, within various contexts, both regarding *multi-level and multi-actor governance,* and addressing *national – regional – local levels.* In many case studies it was noted that there is a lack of understanding of the *multi-level governance of tourism with* actors at different levels or governance right up to EU level.

1.3. Regional development

Social Capital

Encouraging democratic engagement with cultural tourism can be achieved by including tacit voices, by improving participation of local residents in decision making processes, by building trust by including local interests of residents and make topics broader, and by promoting involvement of young people.

Social cohesion. Volunteers can help to involve people at a local level in cultural tourism promotion, if professionally instructed. Inclusion of residents can be enhanced by granting free or subsidised access to sites, to increase "ownership".

Cultural Capital

Cultural development. Tourism encourages local people to recognise and value aspects of their own culture. Schools are crucial in promoting local culture and heritage, e.g. interviewing older people. Storytelling helps also bridging existing gaps between minorities and majority resident groups.

Education. Good practices reported in the case studies are education in other languages (Poland), training for traditional arts such as dry stone building (Greece) or educating youths about local history through industrial museums (Estonia), educating not only visitors, but residents as well.

Co-design with local stakeholders. Co-design of tourist attractions between local stakeholders and researchers took place successfully through workshops, forums, symposiums, network events and round tables.

Economic development

Economic development. In many case study areas it was observed that what is good for tourists is also good for locals thanks to upgrading of public facilities and infrastructure. Development Trusts at a local level would

be a way of pooling funds from private sector, EU, NGOs, state funding, etc., with a model of public/private partnership. These work well e.g. in some parts of Scotland.

Local and regional development. It was observed in the case studies that adequate marketing of the local image of the place needs to be undertaken at a regional level in a co-ordinated way. For example, provision at regional level of many small amounts of funding for individual local projects could be very effective. This can enhance a sort of seed corn funding, after which the most successful ones can be upscaled.

Environmental issues. It is noted that mass tourism may not be very different from cultural tourism in terms of environmental damage. But the smaller scale of cultural tourism can definitely help to preserve the environment if it is done in a sustainable way. Good examples of how Cultural Tourism policy can make a difference for the environment are banning cruise ships in NL because of unsightliness, and Italian innovations in vineyards involving architectural monuments and festivals. In both cases the local economic development has profited from the changed focus of tourism.

Phots 6, 7 and 8: Monumental buildings in Syros (Greece)

2. Policy Implications and Recommendations

The following recommendations can be formulated from the above signals and analysis.

2.1. Cultural tourism and shifts in culture

- *Cultural transformation:* Continue to research the development of cultural capital in relation to socio-economic processes in the region, interactions between tourists, residents and local entrepreneurs and the evolution of local identity and meaning formation.

- *Changes and transitions in cultural values:* besides marketing separate tangible and intangible cultural heritage, it can be put down more as an arrangement of tangible and intangible cultural tourism.

- *Tangible and intangible cultural heritage:* Cooperation between tangible and intangible cultural heritage would definitely foster a more complete tourism offer, linking traditions to monuments and landscapes. Focus on transferring knowledge, skills and meaning to younger generations.

- *Creative and interactive cultural tourism:* Check whether new products can be developed based on new values, check whether existing values can be brought in new ways also for new players. Many combinations are possible: New wine in new bottles for a new audience. But also: old wine in old bottles for a new audience.

- *Digitalisation:* offer digital portals for stakeholders, see whether virtual reality glasses, games and QR codes can foster imagination, increasing the attractiveness especially for younger tourists.

- *Social media:* Find out what's happening in blogging and vlogging both by professionals (influencers, tourist agencies) and by enthusiasts (fans). If this can increase further: make this a conscious marketing strategy for cultural tourism.

2.2. Europeanisation, sustainability and governance

The following recommendations can be formulated regarding Europeanisation, sustainability and governance.

Europeanisation

- Making links between different countries can benefit each of them in the sense of "unity in diversity", showing: this culture is European Culture (e.g. dry stone walling, wine or cheese making, cultural routes).
- Tourist passe-partouts per city can be extended to other cities in Europe.
- Acknowledgement of different types of culture, such as vernacular culture, folk culture, ancient culture, etc., would improve the consciousness of cultural diversity and identity across Europe.
- Educational exchange within Europe between different countries that experience similar challenges and opportunities for Cultural Tourism, could greatly benefit unity in diversity as well.

Sustainability
- A European Guideline for Sustainable Tourist Development could be of great help.
- Sustainable (cultural) tourism training and education among (future) tourism professionals could be increased and enhanced.

Governance

Vertical communication up and down between national – regional and local levels but also horizontal communication between them and other actors in different countries would substantially improve harmonised and targeted tourism policies and incentives for sustainable tourism. Various forms of overlapping organisation can be found which, with some capacity building, could achieve a more international standing (e.g. travel areas, networks for gastronomy etc.).

Moreover we observe a need to connect tourism with imaginative ideas of storytelling, movies, literature etc.

All levels can play a role for cultural tourism:

- EU guidance helps with clear harmonisation policies, e.g. in digitalisation and quality labelling, but also in subsidising new promising developments;
- National authorities can play a role in marketing on national level with regulatory instruments to safeguard cultural values, in a sort of positive censorship;
- Regional and local governance are crucial to create an open and transparent climate for tourism entrepreneurship, improving accessibility and promoting local identity and products.

The following recommendations can be made:

At the EU level an EU *Cultural Tourism TripAdvisor* could be launched, to keep a better eye in tourism development and sustainability criteria, rather than leaving that to private companies. Also an EU YouTube channel could be dedicated to cultural tourism marketing.

In this context, many stakeholders noted the need for a *European level database or platform* where relevant information on cultural tourism issues could be stored and accessed by travellers. This would need to be done at an EU level and thus in different languages and could be fed by the channels mentioned above.

There is a need to create *international cross-border cultural routes*, links between activities and festivals (e.g. food, wine, beer, folklore, music, etc.). Examples are the many already existing pilgrim routes as a way to connect places for religious reasons, but could also be based on similar architecture, music, etc., or on links between the many minorities in Europe.

In many countries better integration of tourism and culture policies is needed to overcome an inadequate dominance of the economic interests over the heritage protection ones. This also needs to be reflected in education about tourism (which is largely economically oriented). *Universities could play an important role* as repositories of cultural expertise, together with museums and cultural organisations.

Photos 9 and 10: regional food and wine

2.3. Recommendations for regional development

The following recommendations were given for social capital, cultural capital and economic development.

Social Capital

Encouraging democratic engagement with cultural tourism. Make proactive efforts to also hear from people who do not make themselves heard, give local residents opportunities to participate in decision-making, build trust by recognizing residents' interests in an early stage, broaden certain topics so that they become more attractive for residents to discuss them and involve younger people.

Social cohesion. Use volunteers to consciously involve more residents at a local level in cultural tourism. Offer free or subsided access to residents for promotion of different forms of cultural tourism.

Cultural capital

Cultural development. Involve the local people much more in local tourism to experience the values of their own culture. In schools, also focus on storytelling through the elderly and minorities. Learn that the same cultural objects and activities can and should be experienced differently by residents and tourists.

Education. Invest in education in other languages, provide training in traditional arts and crafts and involve the youth and not only tourists, but also residents.

Co-design with local stakeholders. As researchers, focus on co-design with stakeholders. Organize interaction through workshops, forums, symposiums, network meetings and round tables.
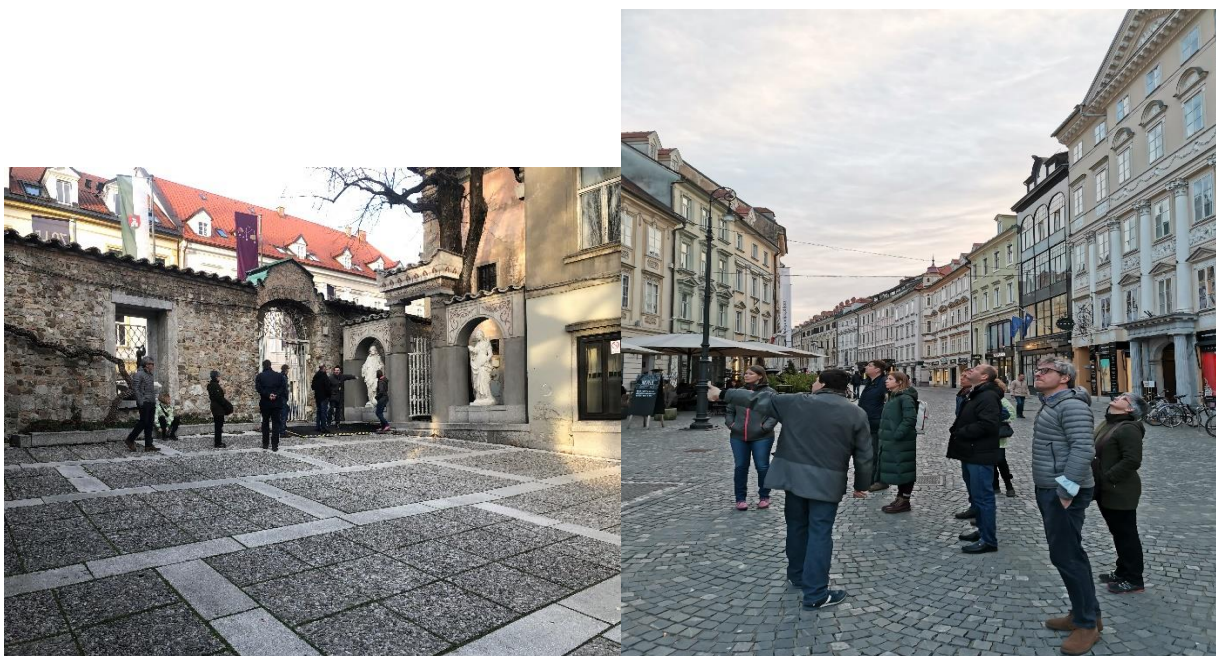
Photos 11 and 12: Education by a guide in Ljubljana

Economic Development

Economic Development: Set up Development Trusts at a local level. They can help with upgrading of public facilities and infrastructure. This would be a way of pooling funds from private sector, EU, NGOs, state funding etc with a model of public/private partnership.

Local and regional development: Ensure regional management of cultural tourism development. Reward multiple individual local initiatives and see if successful initiatives still need help to scale further.

Environmental issues: Link developments of (smaller scale) cultural tourism always to sustainability for people (social and cultural), planet and profit. Cultural tourism must be synonymous with sustainable tourism.

Project Identity

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10

ESTONIA

PolicyBRIEF

SPOT

SOCIAL AND INNOVATIVE PLATFORM
ON CULTURAL TOURISM
AND ITS POTENTIAL TOWARDS
DEEPENING EUROPEANISATION

www.SPOTprojectH2020.eu

Industrial Heritage Tourism in Ida-Virumaa
Practice, potential and recommendations

For local, regional and national policymakers

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Introduction

This document is based on the results of the international Horizon 2020 funded project *Social and Innovative Platform on Cultural Tourism and Its Potential Towards Deepening Europeanisation*. Among the 14 European case studies and Israel as the 15th, Estonia is represented by Ida-Virumaa, or the Ida-Viru county. Ida-Virumaa is noteworthy for a range of tangible and intangible heritage which has a controversial position in the society, such as war monuments, Soviet architecture and industrial complexes. Meanwhile, many objects have also been recognised in the national registry of cultural monuments (see: National Heritage Board of Estonia 2009). This policy brief focuses on the large-scale industrial complexes and their surrounding landscapes. Two recently published major research reports, *Adaption of Ida-Virumaa County's Economy and Labor Market to the Reduction of Oil Shale Industry* and *Heritage Tourism in Estonia: Potential and Development Perspectives* suggest that Ida-Virumaa could become the main target of industrial tourism in Estonia. This policy brief assesses this potential, drawing on the practical experiences and suggestions by local entrepreneurs and organisations. It is addressed to stakeholders on different levels and advocates regional cooperation in the development on industrial tourism.

The research featured here was conducted by the Tallinn University working group in the years 2020—2021. In Autumn 2020, surveys on the state of cultural tourism were conducted among tourism entrepreneurs, visitors, and residents in Ida-Virumaa. Next year, interviews were held with various tourism stakeholders in the region. They were identified and listed with the help of the coordinator of Ida-Viru Tourism Cluster (led by Ida-Viru Enterprise Centre). Interviews were also held with the coordinator of Ida-Viru Tourism Cluster and the representatives of Visit Estonia, the national tourism board at Enterprise Estonia. In addition, representatives from the local municipalities were invited to participate, but only the towns of Sillamäe and Narva joined. In total, 16 interviews were held (see the full list below). The meetings were constrained by the COVID-19 lockdown measures, so some of the interviews were carried out in person and others online. While the other conversations provided necessary background information, three interviews were especially insightful in terms of industrial heritage tourism: 1) Kohtla-Järve Oil Shale Museum, 2) Estonian Mining Museum, and 3) OÜ Narva Gate (Kreenholm area and Kreenholm Textile Factory; see map below). The locations of these stakeholders are marked in red on the map below, while other large-scale post-industrial developments are marked in yellow. The interview results were then compared with the development plans of all eight municipalities in Ida-Virumaa.
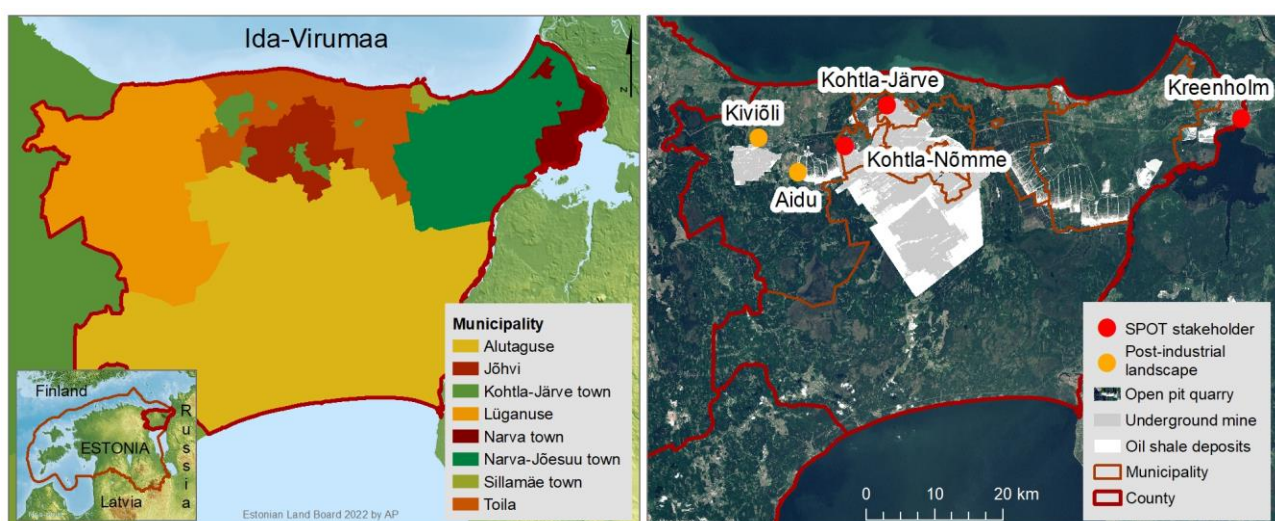
1. Evidence and Analysis

Industrial objects have a steady place in the local cultural tourism offer, but regional policy documents make no references to industrial heritage nor industrial tourism as a concept. Industrial heritage rather features under the unspecified "cultural" or "historical" heritage.

In **stakeholder interviews**, cultural tourism was defined through places and events which in their unique combinations set people on the move. **Among residents**, next to historical locations and objects, post-industrial complexes and landscapes, such as the Kreenholm area, Kiviõli Adventure Centre, and Estonian Mining Museum dominate the list of places that are deemed the most attractive for tourism in the survey. Events held in those locations have already become established, such as the Station Narva music and urban festival and Narva Opera Days that have made use of the Kreenholm complex, or Mägede Hääl music festival, formerly held on the grounds of the Estonian Mining Museum and as of recent, at Lake Peipus.

As apparent from the **marketing materials** of the Ida-Viru Tourism Cluster and the **development plans** of the local municipalities, the industrial and post-industrial sites of Kiviõli Adventure Centre, Aidu Water Land, Estonian Mining Museum in Kohtla-Nõmme, Oil Shale Museum in Kohtla-Järve, and the Kreenholm Textile Factory in Narva heavily rely on tangible and intangible industrial heritage and have found their own niche to attract visitors. Nevertheless, most of them are not presented as industrial heritage tourism attractions. Instead, industrial heritage forms an essential part of adventure tourism (Kiviõli Adventure Centre, Aidu Water Land), nature tourism (Alutaguse Hiking Club tours), shock tourism (Avasta Eesti tours), history tourism (Kreenholm area), education (Oil Shale Museum), or edutainment (Estonian Mining Museum) and they often also serve as a backdrop for art(ists), theatre, events, etc.

Some of the key points that stakeholders criticised about cultural tourism also affect industrial (heritage) tourism:

• lack of clear goals and structure;

• scarcity of tourism providers (attractions, accommodation, catering and other services);

• little involvement of cultural institutions;

• too little substantial cooperation between the towns and rural municipalities.

Similarly, proposals that would benefit cultural tourism could also have a positive effect on industrial (heritage) tourism:

• a clear definition of cultural tourism, which would help to develop the field and make its way into statistics and strategies;

• identification of specific sub-focus areas of cultural tourism, such as history, archaeology, industry, etc.

Another controversial topic to tackle are the local people that still remember the working days of the factories. According to some stakeholders, locals are often sceptical towards tourism endeavours in post-industrial areas, as they are convinced that tourism as a service-based sector cannot replace productive industry. Therefore, it is important to clearly communicate the benefits of industrial (heritage) tourism in other aspects, not only financial:

• tourism in general can function as an economic diversifier;

• industrial legacy as heritage can empower local communities that identify themselves with the (former) industry;

• tourism as a cultural exchange and informal education, in (post-)industrial areas especially as an introduction to environmental sustainability and justice.

2. Policy Implications and Recommendations

Industrial (heritage) tourism could be one of the easily developed tourism concepts in Estonia, as there are already many independent well-developed offers. The reanimation of large-scale post-industrial spaces in Ida-Virumaa can only take place if industrial heritage and industrial (heritage) tourism are recognised and funded on a state level.

Even though some stakeholders were sceptical about the implementation of development plans, agendas and tourism policies, they generally agreed that representation in such documents is important, especially when applying for funding. **Industrial heritage needs a clear definition to:**

1) **gain visibility**;

2) **increase thematic collaboration** in the region;

3) **develop international networks**;

4) **apply for funding** on a regional, national and international level.

On state level, **post-industrial spaces** that combine architecture and history and already draw international attention as elements in global networks, such as Estonian Mining Museum, **should be further promoted**.

In addition to recognising industrial heritage, the state should develop a **coherent strategy for funding** museums that focus on it.

On local level, **mechanisms to engage local people** in industrial tourism should be explored further, such as:

1) employing former workers as guides who are encouraged to share their personal stories;

2) offering locals with different skillsets volunteer positions at temporary events;

3) special offers or reduced prices for residents could help to mitigate the alienation from cultural resources felt by some of them and/or make them value their heritage and present it with pride.

List of stakeholders interviewed in September and December 2021:

1. Kohtla-Järve Oil Shale Museum, 2.09.2021
2. Sillamäe Town, 3.09.2021
3. Estonian Mining Museum, 13.09.2021
4. Sillamäe Museum, 14.09.2021
5. Independent tourism entrepreneur and guide, active in Sillamäe, 14.09.2021
6. Viru Film Fund, 14.09.2021
7. Jõhvi Concert Hall, 14.09.2021
8. Vaba Lava Theatre Centre in Narva, 14.09.2021
9. OÜ Blueray (VR Toila 1938), 17.09.2021
10. Vaivara Sinimägede AS (Vaivara Blue Hills Museum and Narva-Jõesuu Ethnography Museum), 17.09.2021
11. OÜ Narva Gate (Kreenholm area and Kreenholm Textile Factory), 23.09.2021
12. Narva Art Residency, 23.09.2021
13. Alutaguse Community Centre, 29.09.2021
14. Enterprise Estonia (Visit Estonia)
15. Municipality of Narva, Department for Development and Economy, 7.12.2021
16. Ida-Viru Enterprise Centre (Ida-Viru Tourism Cluster), 15.12.2021

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6

Cultural Heritage Tourism along the Styrian Iron Route

Autor: Jörn Harfst, Jasmin Sandriester, Carmen Kern

Introduction

The Styrian Iron Route has been characterized by mining and steel processing for centuries until today. Like many other industrial regions in Europe, this heritage and present-day culture forms a unique cultural landscape full of material and immaterial remains, as well as present-day companies with international reputation, set in a stunning Alpine landscape. The region possesses a major USP in form of the Erzberg, as one of the few public accessible surface mining sites of its kind in Europe. Interconnected touristic experiences such as the "Adventure Ore Mountain tour", annual sport events like the "Erzbergrodeo" and the close-by UNESCO Global Geopark "Eisenwurzen", underline the character of an adventurous tourism destination also to the outside of the Styrian context.

The region is marked by a close, but effective actor's network which encompasses different interest groups. Private actors, companies, associations, the university as well as political representatives all have close connections. The strong interdependence of the core players, the stable political constellation, the rootedness of the parties in rather mono-structured industries, however, makes the network somewhat exclusive. Additionally, the regional actors, esp. from politics, show a weak and changing identification with tourism. In general, a broad-based cooperation between the tourism actors and a proper destination management are missing so far.

All in all, the region is rich in cultural heritage, especially regarding its industrial past, yet it still constitutes a challenging tourism destination: The industrial image, a lack of tourism-related services and investments as

well as different interests of involved stakeholders inhibit further development. Also, given the hard competition on the domestic tourism market, the valorisation of cultural potentials is an increasingly important challenge. Strengthening cooperation, fostering regional identification, making use of innovative branding strategies, e.g. incorporating the locals as well as the tourists in the target groups and creating new job opportunities - represent the challenges of the near future, but must be overcome by regional actors in order to create a sustainable tourism product.

1. Evidence and Analysis

1.1. Status quo of cultural heritage tourism along the Styrian Iron Route

Cultural heritage, in its material and immaterial forms, is nowadays one of the most thriving elements in the tourism industry. In this regard the Styrian Iron Route is in a comfortable position, boasting a range of cultural assets, often (but not exclusively) linked to its industrial past. One of these is even recognized by the UNESCO. Much of this heritage is preserved and displayed by the regional Museum Association, a cultural network of 12 local museums. The biggest institution is the Kunsthalle in Leoben, which regularly features exhibitions with national outreach. Leoben is also home of the historic Stadttheater (city theatre) and is additionally an important location for MICE tourism. Here, the opening of the new congress centre in 2022 will increase opportunities further. The region's undisputed "unique selling proposition" is nevertheless the Erzberg mining site, with its various, interconnected offers. Besides displaying mining traditions and customs in museums, the connection of culture and art has become very popular and offers the opportunity for economic and social transformation. So the region features the cultural initiative "eisenerZ*ART" with its goal to discover the special essence of the place and its inhabitants by connecting traditional cultural forms with modern art. Another good example is the "Rostfest", an annual festival for regional impulses, which is trying to cultivate an alternative subculture in the town of Erzberg. Furthermore, the region has developed and advertised a quality label for regional products ("Genussreich"), is home to an annual motor sport event "Erzbergrodeo" and offers a unique, visitor friendly, glimpse into the realities of modern day industrial production (Gösser, VOEST).

Figure 1: Eisenstraßen-Song von Gebrüder Jakob, © Stafan Lozar

Figure 2: GANGART – Montanistic performance at the Erzberg Art project by Lawine Torrèn © for the eisenerZ*ART 2012 on behalf of the VA Erzberg GmbH

1.2.   Opportunities and barriers for a better utilisation

Cultural tourism has helped to diversify the local economy of Styrian Iron Route to a certain degree. It introduced additional services next to industries and industry-related services in the region and has upgraded the image of the region – from a "rusty" industrial region to one with attractive townscapes, nature exploration, sports, and MICE activities. Such offers attract more people and are combinable with other, already exisisting, tourism products based on industrial heritage, such as the museum route. Altogether these offers create a package, showcasing the industrial heritage of the region and providing an incentive for visitors to stay longer or return. Industrial heritage constitutes an important "add-on" or byproduct to the prevailing tourism-types of nature tourism (skiing, hiking etc.) and sports tourism.

Nevertheless, it also has to be stated that tourism in general, contrary to other regions in Styria, is not a major driver in terms of employment. The share of employment has even decreased already in pre-COVID times and there are severe issues concerning a lack in qualified service staff across the tourism sector, hampering business in opening hours, service quality and long-term perspectives of businesses. While the touristic offers are distributed across the region, nevertheless the core touristic infrastructures such as hotels are mainly situated in and around the town of Leoben itself. Additionally, as the visitor flow in the pandemic showed, many tourism infrastructures need investment and locations have experienced a breach in caring capacity, mainly in form of shortage in parking facilities and the closure (and limited opening hours) of gastronomy and other service providers.

These problems are not new for the region itself, nor are these aspects different from many other industrial regions across Europe, struggling with a difficult image, low service attitude, a lack of investments and deficits in tourism management. The cultural tourism product on offer is geared towards a niche market, that nevertheless may experience growing interest. Here, offering the authentic 'experience' in 'how things are/were done', combined with often cheaper prices of undiscovered and new locations, constitutes an interesting market position.

2. Policy Implications and Recommendations

2.1. Taking action

Overall, the challenges of cultural tourism in industrial towns and regions are specific and multidimensional, requiring place-based solutions tailored to the region's needs, from a variety of actors. The Styrian Iron Route is marked by a close, but effective actor's network which encompasses different groups of the region, which all have close connections. This makes it difficult for new players to gain access and gives additional weight to different interests between single stakeholders or municipalities.

Given the rather low political standing of the topic of tourism in the region, there is more need for coherent action. Stakeholders should aim for a long-term, holistic strategy that considers different sectors, thereby combining multiple actors from different backgrounds and fields, e.g. youth and heritage institutions, private companies and administration. The existing USP should be strengthened, and the region should clearly position itself in the field of cultural tourism towards its market niche. This will require more professional structures on regional level in close cooperation with Styria Tourism. The new destination management structures are a step towards this direction but creating a new Leitbild of the Erzberg-Leoben destination will require a broader stakeholder engagement, both for civil society and government, to create a stronger, recognizable image of the region. Further, an inclusive approach must be pursed to ensure the creation of added value also for small cultural heritage institutions besides the already existing influential touristic players (see lighthouse model).

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	Wageningen University & Research, Wageningen, Netherlands
	Tallinn University, Estonia
	Karl Franzens University of Graz, Austria
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5

CULTURAL TOURISM

PolicyBRIEF

SPOT
SOCIAL AND INNOVATIVE PLATFORM
ON CULTURAL TOURISM
AND ITS POTENTIAL TOWARDS
DEEPENING EUROPEANISATION

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October 2022 | SPOT Policy Brief #19

How to bring cultural tourism to rural and remote regions

Authors: Professor Claire Wallace, John Shaddock, Dr. Stephanie Garrison

Introduction

Although cultural tourism is a well-recognized and expanding area of tourism in urban destinations, the role of cultural tourism in rural and remote regions is less acknowledged. The SPOT project focused on rural and remote areas throughout Europe and is able to shed some light on how cultural tourism can be developed there. In this Policy Brief, we draw together some lessons from the research to highlight some of the issues relevant to policy makers at both regional, national and European levels. Learning from other regions is an important outcome of comparative projects like the SPOT project.

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1. Evidence and Analysis

The SPOT cultural tourism project focused on countries with different kinds of tourism development. The majority of areas were rural areas, often underdeveloped in terms of tourism.
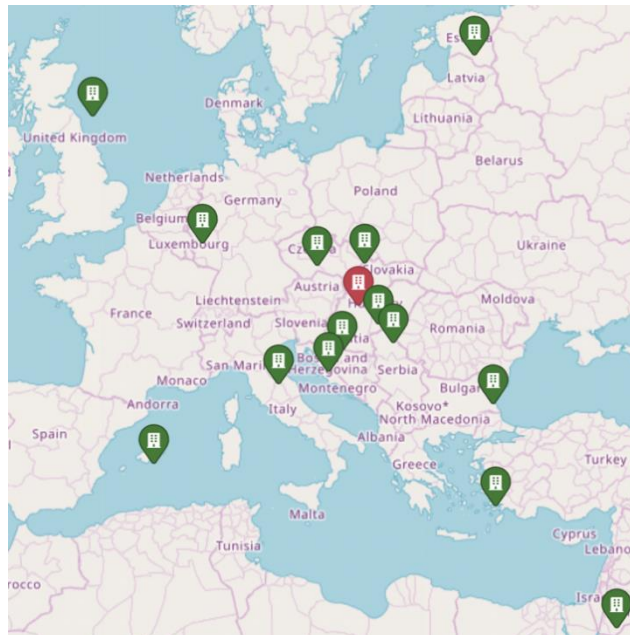
Figure 1: Map of 15 SPOT partners by country

The case study areas were: Barcelona in Spain, Kinderdijk in the Netherlands and some of the Cyclades Islands in Greece, Doune and Galashiels in Scotland, Ljubljana in Slovenia, South Moravia in the Czech Republic, Industrial areas of Styria in Austria, the Beit She'an valley in Israel, the Valley of Palaces and Gardens in Lower Silesia, Poland and the Lausatia region of Germany, Nitra in Slovakia, Komáron in Hungary/Komarno in Slovakia, Bužau Carpathians in Romania and the Ida-Verumaa region in Estonia.

Whilst the situation in each of these regions was very different, it is possible to pull together common themes to answer the question: how do we attract cultural tourism to rural and remote regions of Europe? To do this we need to identify four conceptual shifts that emerged from our studies. These are described below.

I.   **To redefine cultural tourism to include landscapes as culture** in addition to the more commonly recognized built heritage of cities, castles, museums and galleries. This is also acknowledged by UNESCO who have, or are considering, recognizing some of the landscapes in which our case studies were situated as of exceptional value (for example, the South Moravian region, the Narva region of Estonia and the Castles and Valleys region of Lower Silesia). In the SPOT project, teams have been arguing for an eclectic and encompassing model of cultural heritage that can include industrial heritage, agricultural heritage, communist era heritage as well as natural landscapes unique to different areas of Europe. All of these can be seen as "cultural" in the sense that they embrace unique histories of the regions which have been imprinted on the surrounding environment.

II. **To redefine heritage to include the recent past or even ongoing legacies**. Whilst some areas such as the picturesque windmill landscapes of Kinderdijk, or a medieval castle at Doune can be seen as "classical" forms of heritage, other forms of heritage might include more recent industrial regions. This was the case with the industrial Iron Road in Austria or the more recent legacies of communism in many Central European countries or the heritage of the Second World War in terms of physical destruction and altered landscapes, which form part of the heritage of the area, as was the case in Ida-Verumaa in Estonia. Indeed the whole enterprise of heritage can be an act of rediscovering a hidden past as was the case in Lower Silesia where the pre World War 11 landscapes, palaces and gastronomy of the region are being revived.

III. **To redefine heritage to include imaginative heritage** in the repertoire of heritage with different landscapes taking on different meanings depending upon the stories told around them. These can be in form of colorful legends (as in the Bužau mountains in Romania), the use of sites for film sets and TV series (as is the case of Doune Castle in Scotland) or the role of different authors in creating a landscape based upon the area, which people then want to visit as in the case of the Piedmont literary park in Italy or the Scotland created by Sir Walter Scott in his romantic historical novels.

IV. **To develop the digital representation of cultural heritage** through the use of websites, blogs, vlogs, webcams, social media etc. which was already well developed in last decade but received a further stimulus from the COVID lockdowns, when digital media became the most important form of communication between households and encouraged "virtual" as well as corporeal visiting.

Category	A	B	C
Historical sites and buildings	4	4	2
Cultural heritage sites and buildings	5	1	3
Restaurants/food festivals		2	2
Music events (concerts/festivals)		2	2
Local traditions/folklore		2	2
Cultural routes	2	2	1
Townscapes	1	1	2
Health sites (e.g. spas/hot springs)	1		
Museums	1		
Film/theatre	1		1
Religious sites/events		1	

Table 1: Taken from the Visitors Survey in 2020 illustrates the fact that cultural tourism could cover a wide variety of offerings either separately or together. Source: D1.4 Table 30

Following from these theoretical shifts, we now focus on more practical and targeted lessons learned from our case studies.

Figure 2: Photograph showing the revival of pre War heritage in Poland: The Grand Palace in Łomnica and The Wojanów Palace Lower Silesia

1.1. Good practices

The good practices can be summarized as the role of cultural routes, the role of gastronomy and wine tourism, the role of festivals and events, the development of "nature tourism", out of season tourism and finally the role of tour guides and local people in telling the stories about the place.

Some of our case study areas certainly benefited from the development of **"cultural routes"** increasingly recognized at a European level. These can be routes themed around a particular style of tourism or a particular topic. The Council of Europe has recognized and listed some cultural routes, including the for example the Viking Routes, pilgrimage routes, architectural routes and so on https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes. In less explored and remote areas, cultural routes can a be way of connecting areas within countries to create a more complete experience. However, it can also be a way for connecting places across borders as well – and perhaps in the future even across seas. These cultural routes can help foster the Europeanisation potential of cultural tourism by linking different places through cultural themes. For example, the cultural route associated with cultural heritage is helping to draw attention to Nitra as a tourism hub in Slovakia. Furthermore, wine and gastronomy are being developed as cultural routes which can also exist across borders.

Figure 3: Cultural route developed around Nitra in Slovakia

Wine and gastronomy are developing areas of cultural tourism which help to recognize the intangible as well as the tangible cultural heritage of the region. They make the link between heritage, lived culture and agricultural/industrial landscapes. They can creatively involve local entrepreneurs and members of local communities as is illustrated in the development of wine tourism in Italy, the Czech Republic and the Cyclades islands among our case studies.

Figure 4: Regional food from our case study in Italy

Festivals and events are increasingly seen as ways in which to highlight aspects of local cultural heritage and attract visitors. In the Scottish Borders yearly book festivals have an important role in the annual tourism calendars, highlighting the role of local authors (for example crime writers using the area as a setting) and thus developing imaginative cultural heritage. Similarly, film festivals can be used to create off-season events. However, rural areas are generally well known for their distinctive folklore, costumes and music, which can represent intangible cultural assets and connect with local stakeholders. In the Cyclades this took the form of festivals honouring various local saints but involving food, drink, music and dancing from the whole community.

The development of **nature tourism was** used in some areas to enjoy the cultural landscapes and offer visitors a way of appreciating them. In the Lausatia area of Germany for example, cycle tracks and hiking trails were being developed and in the Netherlands, boat trips could serve the same function. Bird spotting and photography trips could also be a way of preserving the natural heritage whilst allowing people to become immersed in it. In Lower Silesia the bike and hiking trails were designed to allow visitors to enjoy the landscape and natural attractions as well as lead them to cultural sites.

Figure 5: Eildon Hills on the Scottish Borders – a popular destination for walkers and cyclists

Figure 6: The park around the Bukowiec Palace, Lower Silesia

Off-season tourism. Although the peak tourism seasons tend to be during the Spring and Summer, cultural tourism can potentially attract people throughout the year. For example, on the Cyclades Islands in Greece there is a well developed winter tourism trend especially in Santorini and Mykonos, where cultural attractions played a very significant part. This can help to smooth out the visitors across the year and provide a less crowded and "slower" experience for tourists. Considering cultural tourists are often middle aged or even elderly, visits during the cooler times of the year can be attractive for them. In Lubjlana, international congresses and conferences are promoted in the off-peak periods (spring and autumn) to expand the tourist season, though these activities require a high level of tourism infrastructure.

Recognizing the role **tour guides, vloggers and bloggers** can be an important aspect of attracting tourists to more remote and rural regions. These are the people that can tell stories about the place which can make it attractive by creating imaginative heritage. Whilst tour guides tell their stories to visitors, vloggers and bloggers might do this digitally either voluntarily as part of the creative commons or with a more commercial goal in mind – indeed tour guides can also be vlogger and bloggers to drum up trade. In Lower Silesia (Poland)

their role was very important. The tour guides shared knowledge about the local area in various ways by doing tours in heritage costumes and developing their own guidebooks.

Figure 7: Examples of QR audio tour guides

Story telling is increasingly recognized as an aspect of cultural tourism and this is particularly the case where the stories might be less well known – for example in rural areas. Geographical places take on a new meaning once they are associate with stories either originating from the place or as settings for crime or historical novels and films. Stories can help to make industrial heritage and local crafts more interesting and accessible to visitors as was the case in Kinderdijk and in the Bužau mountains where the local legends about the enchanted Luana's country helped to capture the imagination. These stories can be used both to attract visitors but also to make places more attractive to their own residents and neighbours. The increasing role of "influencers" needs to be recognized here as well as the connections with fans at a wider level.

Games and Virtual reality. In some areas the cultural heritage could be made more attractive for visitors by including them in various virtual games (through phone apps) but also in virtual reconstructions. The role of games was used in Komáron/Komarno for example to engage with children and young people, whilst in Estonian Ida-Verumaa it was possible to view the virtual reconstructions of castles and monuments that had previously existed there. In other places QR codes could be used to share information about the place and create cultural trails at a local level. Further information is available on https://www.cultplay.eu/en/cultplay-project.

Social media plays an ever more important role in spreading information, in connecting visitors and local people and in connecting fans and followers in different countries with a place involved in cultural tourism. This needs to be harnessed and developed, whilst recognizing the possible negative consequences of communications online (complaints, harassment etc.)

1.2. The impact of the COVID-19 lockdowns

Whilst the lockdowns were generally very bad for tourism, one of the worst affected industries, it did have some paradoxical results with benefits for rural and remote regions.

First of all, the lack of availability of travel meant that people could not go abroad, so "staycations" became more popular. This meant that people often started to explore the countryside around them rather than go further afield, including remote rural areas.

Secondly, there was a shift from urban to rural areas in terms of visitors because rural areas were seen as safer and less crowded. This is recorded in Austria in the Leoben region but also in Austria generally where more remote and less visited areas became more popular. This helped to open up some rural areas. It was also the case in Lower Silesia, where agri-tourism accommodation boomed whilst the large scale more traditional types of accommodation suffered huge losses.

Thirdly, it allowed over touristed areas time to reflect and reconsider tourism policies. In places like Barcelona the sector focused its energies on attracting local or 'proximity' tourists to the city's major tourist attractions and to areas with great outdoor spaces. Despite a severe reduction in visitor numbers, the city also continued its plan to regulate and reduce the number of AirBnbs and other tourist accommodations.

Fourthly, it encouraged a more individualized, tailored type of tourism as people drove around in the cars or rode bicycles rather than using the more usual mass tourism avenues (such as coach trips). This can help to benefit cultural tourism in remote areas but also in more popular areas such as the Cyclades islands.

Fifthly, it accelerated the role of digital tourism either as an adjunct or a replacement for real visits. This was not only the case for social media and virtual representations. Bookings and payments took place increasingly online. It also made possible the communications between various stakeholders and key actors scattered across a wider territory. In Ida-Verumaa in Estonia, for example, more than 50 stakeholders scattered across a wide rural area were able to communicate using a digital portal, which enhanced their co-ordination during the lockdowns. This innovation may well continue after the lockdowns ended.

Table 2 shows that in most countries in 2020, most visitors were nationals rather than foreigners.

Case study area	National (%)	Foreign (%)
AT	96	4
CZ	100	0
DE	97	3
EE	91	9
ES	9	91
GR	75	25
HU/SK	98	2
IL	93	7
IT	83	17
NL	49	51
PL	92	8
RO	98	2
SI	26	74
SK	87	13
UK	–	–

Table 2: Percentage of Visitors, national/domestic. Source D1.4, Table 7

1.3. The limitations of tourism in rural and remote areas

The COVID lockdowns also illustrated some of the limitations of tourism in rural and remote areas. First of all there is often a lack of service infrastructure (hotels, restaurants etc.) and even those that were open many closed under COVID and never reopened or were limited by lack of staff.

Secondly, the lack of transport infrastructure in rural regions means that motorized travel increased leading to congested roads, wild camping and lack of parking spaces. This was the case for example at Doune Castle where visitors were restricted by the lack of parking available and in the Kinderdijk area there were problems of congestion too.

Figure 8: No parking sign in Doune village, Scotland

Thirdly, digital communications and infrastructure are often poor or lacking in rural and remote areas, which is especially a problem give the "digital turn" in tourism for bookings, information seeking and social media communication.

On the whole though, local communities were happy to welcome a rise in cultural tourist visitors to their areas (Table 3).
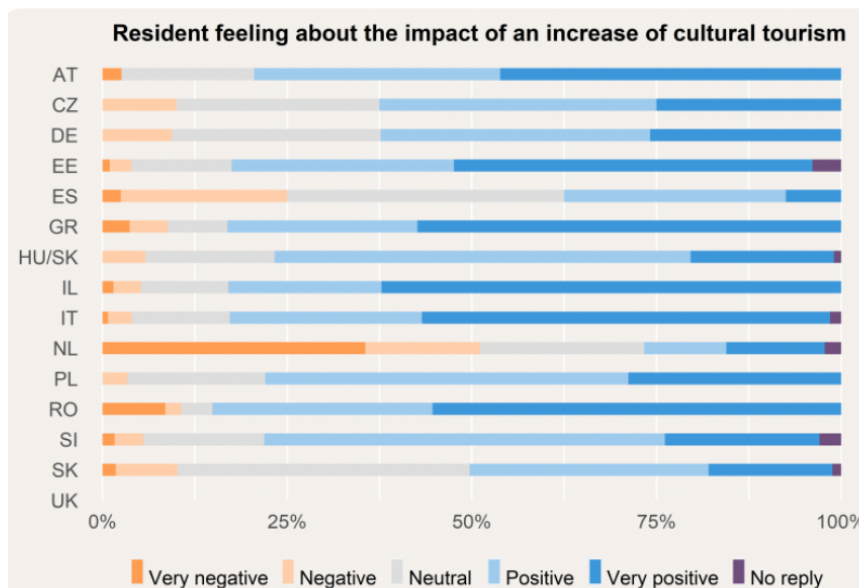
Table 3: Resident feeling about the impact of an increase in cultural toursim. Source: D1.4, Figure 16

It is not clear to what extent the "return to the local" will continue as an aspect of cultural tourism. Ongoing problems with international travel at the time of writing would suggest that local tourism or proximity tourism (visits from accessible neighboring countries) are likely to persist. This also feeds into the nationalist agendas of some countries keen to promote local areas as an expression of the nation.

2. Policy Implications and Recommendations

One factor emerging from these studies was the lack of policy coherence when it comes to cultural tourism. Often responsibilities are split between the Ministries of the Economy (responsible for revenue raising from tourism) and Ministries of Culture where culture is seen as a national (and even nationalist) priority which should not be seen as commercial. These two views are often opposed to one another. In some countries, a National Tourist Agency or Board (such as Visit Scotland in Scotland or the Slovenian Tourist Board in Slovenia) helps to span these two areas but in many countries this is missing (see D2.1).

There is a similar lack of coherence between EU, national and regional/local tourist policies. Our meetings with stake holders suggested that lofty aspirations expressed at an EU or national level often do not connect with local stakeholders.

Policy recommendations

- Bridge the responsibilities of cultural and economic ministries in promoting cultural tourism. One way to do this is to create an agency which is specifically responsible for tourism that cuts across the different ministries
- Ensure coherence between different policies on different geographical scales. For example between EU/national and regional scales
- Ensure the involvement of local stakeholders in shaping cultural tourism policies. Their inputs are vital and they often have better knowledge of local needs and priorities. This can be done for example by creating local networks and umbrella organisations as was done in Idaa-Vermuma during the COVID lockdowns

- Help to create cultural routes (or extend existing ones) to connect remote and rural areas to more mainstream cultural heritage and information sources
- Develop the wine, gastronomy and other intangible heritage aspects of cultural tourism. These can help to involve local stakeholders as well as be linked to the cultural routes described above
- Create the possibilities of festivals and events celebrating local, regional, national, European and global cultures in particular regions
- Use the innovative SPOTIT tool to create better infrastructures and offerings.
- Encourage the development of agri-tourism in areas where it is not already established as a way of linking visitors with local cultures and rural businesses
- Develop (where appropriate) the role of nature tourism through cycle paths, boating waterways, hiking trails and wildlife spotting
- Develop off-season tourism using cultural tourist attractions to smooth out visitor flows through the year and sustain local employment
- Create better transport links for those not travelling in cars and improve infrastructures for water and energy
- Enroll and encourage the role of tour guides, vloggers and bloggers in developing stories around cultural interests in particular places. Local colleges, schools and universities might be able to help in developing these skills. This can also be helped by virtual trails using QR codes, virtual reality and gaming apps
- Create downloadable Apps to help with guiding people around rural areas, which can also reflect specialist interests (for example gardens or gastronomy)
- Develop the promotional and communicative use of social media in spreading news and information about a region to visitors and fans.
- Improve the digital connectivity of rural areas to facilitate information spreading, bookings and payments.

Sources from which this information is drawn:

SPOT Reports and Deliverables (available from SPOTprojectH2020 website)

Graphs and Tables are taken from D1.4 *Report of the results of surveys for tourists, residents and entrepreneurs in the case studies*

Further information can be found in D1.3 *Report on statistical data SPOT*

D2.1 *Policies, Practices and Strategies. Framework Paper*

D2.2 *Summary Report on Stakeholder Involvement*

D2.3 *Summary Report of impact of evaluations of cultural tourism on target areas for types of cultural tourism*

D2.4 *Summary Report on the role of cultural tourism for the development of place identities, the appreciation of "otherness" and the impact on minorities*

Project Identity

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12

CULTURAL TOURISM

PolicyBRIEF

SPOT

SOCIAL AND INNOVATIVE PLATFORM
ON CULTURAL TOURISM
AND ITS POTENTIAL TOWARDS
DEEPENING EUROPEANISATION

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How to make cultural tourism more inclusive

Professor Claire Wallace, John Shaddock and Dr Stephanie Garrison, University of Aberdeen

Introduction

Cultural tourism is being developed across Europe as a way of generating economic growth and improving the quality of life and for the European Commission, this is a way of promoting Europeanisation. However, the benefits of cultural tourism are not equally spread across populations either in terms of visitors, businesses or residents. In this Policy Brief, we draw upon a number of deliverables as part of the SPOT Cultural Tourism project to suggest ways in which the appeal of cultural tourism can be broadened, in line with the EU Agenda on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (EUROPE 2020 A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth /* COM/2010/2020)

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1. Evidence and Analysis

The SPOT project collected information about 15 case study areas across Europe as well as Israel. It aimed to redefine cultural tourism to include not only traditional attractions such as museums and historic buildings but also cultural landscapes, the contribution of recent histories such as those of communism and the Second World War, industrial heritage and the role of national minorities in some regions. The SPOT project focused mainly on rural and remote places, but it also included several urban case studies, where issues of inclusion were also of key importance but perhaps take different forms. Social inclusion issues are relevant when considering visitors, employees in the industry and residents of the areas where tourism takes place. Here we focus on evidence of the diversity of populations associated with cultural tourism in order to understand who is included and who is excluded along different dimensions. We look at examples of where inclusion has been specifically identified and we suggest policies that could improve the inclusion of diverse groups.

1.1. Diversity among cultural tourists (visitors)

The results of the surveys carried out in 15 locations of the SPOT project suggest that the **social profile** of cultural tourists differs by region (see D1.4). In the UK survey carried out in 2022, cultural tourists are predominantly over 60, white and middle class. Middle-class pensioners may not necessarily be high-income earners but they value culture and it could be that some cultural attractions are preferable for older people to access, especially if they are indoors. However, this demographic profile differs by region. In Germany, Slovenia and Slovakia, most visitors were older people. However, in the Czech Republic, Italy and Romania they were more likely to be younger people. This might reflect the relative economic position of older people and pensioners in different parts of Europe.

The SPOT survey results suggest that **most visitors were from the same country** and only in Barcelona, Ljubjana and Kinderdijk was there a substantial number of international visitors. However, we should note that the surveys were carried out mainly in the summer of 2020 and sometimes in 2021 when international travel was severely restricted due to the COVID pandemic regulations. These issues are explored in the special issue of *Tourism Culture and Communication* cited in the list of references. Recent survey results from Scotland after the lifting of COVID restrictions suggest that national and even regional visits are most common. To some extent, this regionalization of tourism may have become a more established pattern as many cultural tourism venues targeted their marketing at people from the region or neighbouring countries.

Table 1: National Origins of Visitors.

Case study area	National (%)	Foreign (%)
AT	96	4
CZ	100	0
DE	97	3
EE	91	9
ES	9	91
GR	75	25
HU/SK	98	2
IL	93	7
IT	83	17
NL	49	51
PL	92	8
RO	98	2
SI	26	74
SK	87	13
UK	-	-

Source: D1.4 Report of the results of surveys for tourists, residents and entrepreneurs in the case studies

On the other hand, the rate of **returning tourists** was quite high in the SPOT survey, suggesting that there was a lot of loyalty to particular cultural venues which could be visited many times.

Table 2: Percentage of returning visitors.

Case study area	Previous visit (%)
AT	64
CZ	60
DE	61
EE	89
ES	41
GR	72
HU/SK	72
IL	88
IT	59
NL	13
PL	55
RO	63
SI	35
SK	95
UK	-

Source: D1.4 Report of the results of surveys for tourists, residents and entrepreneurs in the case studies

Also, the survey suggests that most cultural tourists were **women** (six out of ten) and that cultural tourists were likely to travel as **a couple** without children (51%). Indeed, cultural tourism sites are not generally very interesting for children and in only a few places were there efforts to engage with children and young people. However, three locations did attract younger people: South Moravia, Ljubljana and Nitra (Slovakia).

Cultural tourists are likely to have **a high level of education and to hold or have held middle-class jobs** (professionals, managers etc.). Hence, 57% of tourists had 16 years of education or more and 44% were professionals or managers (D1.4). This perhaps reflects the fact that a certain amount of cultural capital is necessary to appreciate cultural offerings, and this can only be acquired with time and education.

Since many of the areas were rural locations, owning or renting a car was a requirement for getting there, which tends to select towards **more affluent visitors**.

Clearly, cultural tourism appeals to the growing group of middle-class and educated people in Europe.

In most locations covered in the SPOT project, there was little consideration given to access for **disabled people**, such as those in wheelchairs or with hearing and sight restrictions. This was only really the case where there were brand new buildings, which are required to take into account disabled access. Cultural tourism offerings are often in the form of historic monuments and ruins, where it is difficult to incorporate these kinds of conveniences. Awareness of the needs of **neurodivergent people** (e.g. autism etc.) is only just beginning to be taken into account internationally, so there were not many examples in our study either. Finally, whilst **sexual minorities** were seen as possible tourist markets (e.g. LGBT tourism) in some areas, again there was little awareness of their needs and issues in terms of cultural tourism destinations.

The growing importance **of digital communications** in informing visitors and making bookings tends to favour high digital density households with many devices, especially portable handheld ones. This would tend to favour more affluent and digitally informed visitors.

1.1.1. Diversity in employment in cultural tourism destinations

Social inclusion can also be studied in terms of employment. The 15 case studies highlighted the importance of the availability of a **seasonal workforce** (D2.3). Many of these were low-paid and casualized labour. In many places, these tended to be immigrant workers from North Africa or Eastern Europe, which were "invisible" to visitors. In some countries such as Greece, Spain and Italy, many are working in the informal economy without employment protection or social security and not paying taxes to the national authorities. Perhaps because of the COVID limitations on travel, there might have been fewer of these workers than in the past. In the UK this was also due to the consequences of Brexit whereby many European workers, who had previously staffed the hospitality industries, returned home. However, our case studies indicated that there was generally a labour shortage, especially following the lifting of lockdown restrictions.

Some of these gaps in the labour market were filled by **female workers**, whose family situations as carers for children or other family members, might mean that they are more available locally for casual and occasional employment. For example, in Greece, many tourism businesses depend upon family labour in which the work of women and children might be hidden and undeclared. The social and political conservatism of many European rural areas puts women into more traditional roles. The predominance of family businesses in many of the rural tourist locations, also means that the contribution of women and children is a hidden labour resource.

However, the labour shortages in 2022 and onwards, might be meant that there is a rise in wages for these workers or that businesses are simply not able to attract them. There were general shortages of workers in restaurants and cleaning services, with many businesses not able to re-open after the lockdowns due to staff shortages. Paradoxically, the labour market support offered by governments during the COVID-19 pandemic may have postponed this effect. This has been termed the "Great Resignation" whereby many workers did not return to their old jobs and many businesses were forced to close or never re-opened.

The effect of this is that wages rose and hospitality services in many areas became more expensive. It may in the long run lead to the re-skilling and re-evaluation of tourist industry workers.

Developments in cultural tourism highlighting the importance of individualized and personalized approaches using **digital communications and social media** might lead to a demand for more skilled and trained workers in the tourism industry in future, although it was not clear that local educational institutions were either able or willing to meet this need.

1.1.2. Diversity in resident populations

For many of the cultural tourism destinations, **local folklore, costumes and music** were an important part of the attraction. This means that particular traditions would need to be preserved and showcased. The same goes for gastronomy and wine, which were important aspects of cultural tourism highlighted by the SPOT project. Therefore, engaging with local traditions and residents was an important reason why people visited our case study areas.

Figure 1: Folklore dances and customs in Komárno/Komarom.

Many rural areas have been depopulated as younger people have moved to towns for employment or education (or a better social life). This tends to leave **older people and retirees** in rural areas and as repositories for local information and traditions. Recognising this intangible heritage is an important aspect of cultural tourism and for this reason, older people can also be an important resource.

In some cases, **national minorities** are an important element of cultural tourism. For example, in the Danube area of Hungary, the town of Komárom on the Hungarian side and the adjacent border town of Komarno on the Slovak side attracted tourists to the region. By contrast, the hostile border between Narva (Estonia) and Ivangorod (Russia) made the potential communication between these two border towns difficult if not currently impossible to explore through tourism. However, as the majority of Narva's population (up to 97%) is Russophone, it makes the town interesting to both domestic and foreign tourists from elsewhere in Europe. In the Cyclades Islands, the harmonious co-existence of Orthodox and Catholic communities is a factor in the attractiveness of the Islands for visitors. Therefore, national minorities played an important role in cultural tourism, but their impact was variable between case studies.

In other areas, such as Israel, the settlement patterns of Be'it Sheba meant that many of the local minority cultures felt little attachment to the area and were not part of the cultural heritage. These were recently settled people with a sense of grievance. Hence, they **felt alienated** from the cultural visitors and disassociated themselves from the cultural sites. This sense of alienation was also echoed elsewhere, where visitors were from a different social class, age group or country to the resident population. Cultural venues might be too expensive for local people to access.

Furthermore, in some of the SPOT areas, it was the **"vanished" minorities** that were of interest. The interest in former Jewish settlements, cemeteries and synagogues in Eastern Europe (often by Jewish visitors) is a source of cultural tourism and cultural revival. Also, there is a growing interest in the role of former German minorities displaced after the Second World War from Poland and the Czech Republic as German visitors have helped to stimulate the restoration of buildings and the revival of regional cuisine (D2.4).

Altogether then, the diversity of local populations can form an important element in cultural tourism. However, as the survey at the Great Tapestry of Scotland illustrated, local people, can also feel alienated from cultural tourism and see the local sites as something for visitors and not for them. This was also the case in other case study areas.

One positive example, however, was that of the emergence of female winemakers in the Italian case study, making a contribution to a generally male-dominated sector.

2.   Policy Implications and Recommendations

The findings of the SPOT cultural tourism project suggest a number of policy recommendations:

- Better training and upskilling of workers in cultural tourism are needed. This could include the training of tour guides, as well as training in digital communications and social media. Engaging with local colleges and Universities might offer one way forward for this. This might help to attract young people back to rural areas following the "Great Resignation" after the COVID pandemic lockdowns
- There needs to be monitoring of migrant workers and ensuring their social integration into the national cultures and social security systems
- There needs to be monitoring of women's employment as well as other family members, especially in family businesses. Offering training and career enhancement to rural women could help to improve the cultural offering as well as improve the situation of rural women.
- There needs to be better development of cultural tourism attractions throughout the year, including winter, to ensure better employment prospects for residents and economic benefits for regions
- There is an urgent need for the development of access for disabled and neurodivergent visitors as well as raising awareness of these issues. The cultural industries also need to develop activities for these visitors to engage with
- Cultural tourism sites need to develop activities for children and young people, for example through gamification, edutainment, and virtual reality constructions
- Local authorities need to create better public transport and cycling links for rural areas both for environmental reasons and also to widen the attraction of cultural sites for visitors other than car drivers
- There needs to be good digital communications for rural areas, which are often poorly served, in line with the EU policies on digital inclusion. (https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/digital-inclusion)
- Offering discounts to local people to visit cultural tourist sites could help to mitigate the alienation felt by some local people. Another important aspect was involving local populations in the process of creating local tourism agendas and activities to give them a sense of ownership

Sources from which this information is drawn:

SPOT Reports and Deliverables (available from the SPOTprojectH2020 website)

Graphs and Tables are taken from D1.4 *Report of the results of surveys for tourists, residents and entrepreneurs in the case studies*

D1.3 *Report on statistical data SPOT*

D1.5 *Cultural Tourism and Good Practices across case study regions*

D2.1 *Policies, Practices and Strategies. Framework Paper*

D2.2 *Summary Report on Stakeholder Involvement*

D2.3 *Summary Report of impact of evaluations of cultural tourism on target areas for types of cultural tourism*

D2.4 *Summary Report on the role of cultural tourism for the development of place identities, the appreciation of "otherness" and the impact on minorities*

Project Identity

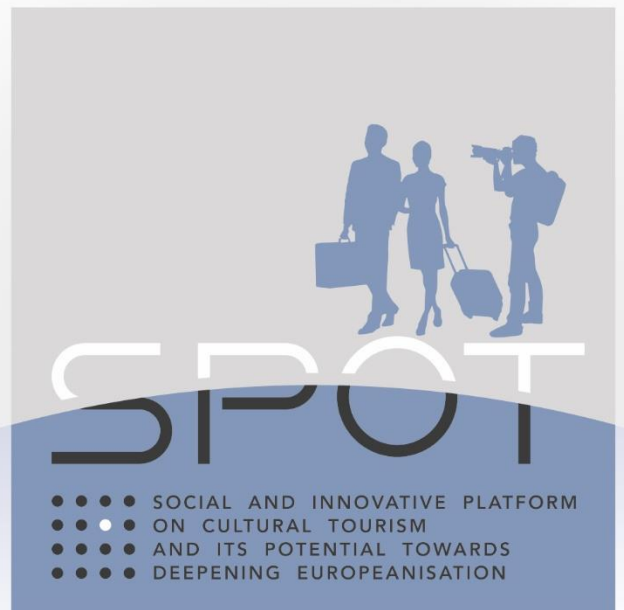|	
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GREECE

PolicyBRIEF

SPOT

SOCIAL AND INNOVATIVE PLATFORM
ON CULTURAL TOURISM
AND ITS POTENTIAL TOWARDS
DEEPENING EUROPEANISATION

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Culture for Tourism. Towards a sustainable future for the Cyclades

Author: University of the Aegean

Introduction

The **case study of the Cyclades** was the subject of in-depth research conducted under the EU-funded SPOT cultural tourism project, with a specific focus on the islands of Andros, Santorini and Syros. In order to understand and assess the state, challenges and prospects of cultural tourism in the Cyclades, an extensive questionnaire survey with tourists, local residents and business representatives, a roundtable discussion, a symposium, and a series of intensive interviews with culture and (cultural) tourism stakeholders took place, during the tourist seasons of 2020, 2021 and 2022. The coincidence of these activities with the COVID-19 pandemic and relevant governmental measures proved to be both positive and negative.

Among the most **world-renowned tourism destinations** in Greece and highly competitive vis-à-vis other top global summer holiday destinations, the Cyclades have always been extremely dependent on tourism for their economic survival. The Southern Aegean islands (Cyclades and Dodecanese) tend to attract 1 out of 4 tourists visiting Greece. **Cultural tourism** differs from island to island, and it does not represent a conscious tourism motive for most Cyclades visitors; however, broadly defined, culture remains the factor that underlies tourists' decision to visit these islands. The Cyclades' cultural heritage and assets tend to be their most significant and distinctive comparative advantages vis-à-vis their competitors. They consist of both tangible and intangible, folk, historical/archaeological and contemporary sites, monuments, practices and

landscapes, i.e. distinctive traditional Aegean architecture and townscapes, gastronomy and music, art and crafts, feasts and festivals, etc. Nonetheless, Cyclades visitors may not only enjoy these assets but also suffer the limitations of their fragile insular character (e.g., smaller-scale destinations, insularity-induced resource limitations).

The **significance of culture for tourism** and concern about the cultural impacts of tourism have been explicitly expressed by various sides. Culture has habitually been considered as the realm most susceptible to adverse tourism impacts and repercussions, although tourism may invigorate, enrich, sustain and/or further develop destination cultures. For instance, the broad spectrum of Cyclade's cultural assets elicits variable cultural tourism. Furthermore, tourism may seriously contribute to **cultural sustainability**—and vice versa. Tourism development elicits and invigorates socio-cultural change at the destinations, e.g., by promoting new values and trends, benefitting social relations, and inducing cultural evolution.

Cultural tourism has been significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and its global and local repercussions, but also constitutes a valuable asset for **sustainable future (tourism) development**, i.e., through cultural heritage preservation, maintenance of traditional values and provision of authentic experiences for tourists. In the current turbulent and transitional times for tourism, issues of sustainability, growing environmental awareness and cultural sensitivity, realizations by destination regions of the precious resources they possess and their vulnerability, as well as changing market demands, become especially poignant, pressing and pivotal for tourism and destinations in general, calling for change and adaptation to emerging trends, attitudes, needs, challenges and prospects.

1. Evidence and Analysis

Tourism in the Cyclades has been continuously growing in the past couple of decades and has been high—although rather inadvertently—reliant on their cultural particularities. Thus, cultural tourism has helped **enhance and promote tourism flows** in the region, it has, directly and indirectly, contributed to economic growth, population retention, an increase in employment opportunities and variable (infrastructure and

other) investments, and to overall **local and regional development**, including cultural development, thus sustaining a beneficent cycle of further cultural tourism development.

On the other hand, **conventional cultural tourism**, as promoted by the Greek State and other top-down institutions, refers mostly to archaeological sites, museums, galleries and theatres and certainly reinforces those heritage aspects of the islands' place identity, tourism and local sustainable development. However, as it is based on relics of the past or high culture, such cultural tourism does not elicit further growth, diversification and change in matters of culture and/ or tourism development and enrichment of overall (cultural) place identity and local standards of living. In the local businesses' and residents' minds, **high culture** (and especially historical or archaeological) attractions seems to have preponderance vis-à-vis **all other forms of culture** (i.e. landscape/ townscape, dance, religion, sports and other events), most gravely echoing the understanding of 'culture' by the Ministry of Culture, and the national level, more generally. This shortcoming has overarching repercussions on the development, management, protection and promotion of all (other) cultural artefacts, sites or other assets for the Cyclades and Greece. The remediation of this problem will have the additional beneficial effect of attracting and/ or creating a far broader spectrum of the domestic and international cultural tourism market for the Cyclades.

Culture and tourism emerge from this exploratory study as positively interlinked in the minds of the locals, the visitors and the entrepreneurs involved in cultural tourism and tourism more generally in the Cyclades. The **culture–tourism relationship** is generally viewed as holding great potential for all sides involved and for local cultural and overall sustainability, despite the broad acknowledgement that the great potential for cultural sustainability in the study area is, to date, far from meeting. The **role of tourism** in local cultural development, management and appropriation is also viewed by the study participants with a degree of trepidation and ambivalence, although by generating revenues, there is an increased incentive for further and better cultural resource protection and preservation. Furthermore, the significance of the **government's role** in (cultural) tourism promotion, development and management and the inclusion of more cultural attractions in the tourism product runs high among local entrepreneurs and other actors/ parties involved in tourism, culture and local overall development.

The understandings of all sides involved in our research coincide as regards the state and challenges of cultural tourism in the Cyclades, expressing the desire for more and more diverse attractions/sites/events in this area. Although there seems to be satisfaction with locally provided cultural tourism aspects and attractions and apparent interest in all types and forms of cultural tourism, admittedly several aspects of existing current Cycladic cultural tourism **leave much to be desired** (number, diversity, pricing and quality of offered cultural activities).

2. Policy Implications and Recommendations

- **The historical and cultural heritage of the Cyclades** needs to be properly managed, promoted and stewarded, based on the overarching acknowledgement of its importance and broad expression of willingness to support its further development.
- **Cultural attractions, sites and events** in the Cyclades need to be further and sustainably expanded, increased and diversified, as there is great potential in their growth and for new/ further locations and traditions to be developed for purposes of cultural tourism.
- **Cultural tourism** needs to be upheld and further developed as the most obvious and promising means to upgrade the Cycladic tourism product and to raise both the economic revenues and the cultural standards of the islands. Such investing and promotion of cultural tourism can improve the brand of the destination, minimize 'mass tourism', attract more niche markets, as well as extend the tourism season, while providing increased incomes, employment, further investment and a higher overall local quality of life.

- The further growth, promotion and development of cultural tourism, however, needs to take place on the basis and serving the goal of **local (cultural) sustainability, and development, while monitoring/ safeguarding from negative implications/ repercussions** of tourism for local culture, social wellbeing, environmental integrity and healthy economic prospects.
- **Collaboration/ cooperation between all involved parties, as well as all sorts of partnerships** (public-private, horizontal-vertical, multi-scale/ level, intersectoral etc.) in the above, is crucial and critical; indeed, it is the only guarantee for the success of all measures.
- **The government (all levels)** needs to invest responsibly in the potential and further development of Cycladic cultural tourism and support local/ regional entrepreneurship in this regard. There is a great need for an increase in general tourism-related funding, planning and management; regulation of cultural activities; heritage preservation and promotion; and serious and sustained investment in infrastructure (i.e. ports of entry, public transport, public services, etc.).
- Significance of future sustainable **development of all aspects of Cycladic cultural tourism** in the islands, for their full, diverse, rich and complex identity to be safeguarded and further developed and enriched, through cultural tourism.
- Such a development obviously ought to entail **all forms and aspects of the islands' culture**, such as folk, popular/ vernacular, contemporary etc.
- Furthermore, it ought not to cater only to short-sighted pursuits of pure economic profit, but on **building positive long-term reciprocal interconnections between tourism and culture**.
- **Tourist flows** need to be better regulated in the area, without compromising the islands' cultural integrity, economic independence and socio-economic standard of living.

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PolicyBRIEF

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AND ITS POTENTIAL TOWARDS
DEEPENING EUROPEANISATION

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Synergies. The key to Cycladic cultural tourism stewardship and development

Author: University of the Aegean

Introduction

The Cyclades are among the most world-renowned and highly competitive global tourism destinations in Greece (e.g. Mykonos and Santorini), with significant implications for their economic survival and development. Indicatively, international tourist air arrivals in the Cycladic islands in 2019 reached 994,000, while the trend for 2022 arrivals is even higher. **Cultural tourism** differs from island to island, and it does not represent a conscious tourism motive for most Cyclades visitors. However, broadly defined, culture remains the main factor underlying tourists' decision to visit these islands, as it constitutes the Cyclades' distinctive tourism-attraction profile and competitive edge, e.g. striking natural/ environmental assets, great landscape diversity, and rich cultural traditions and heritage.

The **case study of the Cyclades** was the subject of in-depth research conducted under the EU funded SPOT cultural tourism project, with a specific focus on the islands of Andros, Santorini and Syros. In order to understand and assess the state, challenges and prospects of cultural tourism in the Cyclades, an extensive questionnaire survey with tourists, local residents and business representatives, a roundtable discussion, a symposium, and a series of intensive interviews with culture and (cultural) tourism stakeholders took place, during the tourist seasons of 2020, 2021 and 2022. The coincidence of these activities with the COVID-19 pandemic and relevant governmental measures proved to be both positive and negative.

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Generally speaking, the Cycladic islands feature **small- and medium-scale tourism**, since they are not as heavily reliant on mass/ package visitor inflows, a trend also reflected in the locally supplied types of accommodation. The latter include family operations, to a very high degree, some of which may also not be formal/ institutionalized. Nonetheless, when destinations, such as Santorini, gain **more international popularity and tourism investment**, they tend to attract more privately-owned businesses or become part of international hotel chains. The growth and development of all other sectors of the local/ regional economy in the Cyclades (e.g., primary-sector activities, services, culture, and gastronomy) tend to follow those of tourism, which constitutes the main source of income for the whole region.

This policy brief focuses on the **significance and exigency of synergies and partnerships** in all the aforementioned sectors and practices in the Cyclades, as a necessary and pressing priority for cultural tourism stewardship and development, and, through the latter, future local/ regional development and growth. Due to the high degree of interconnection and interdependence between the sectors of tourism, culture, society, local resources, sustainability, development, governance etc., such synergies are complex and interweaving.

1. Evidence and Analysis

There is a broad acknowledgement of the significant role of culture in local tourism development, as well as that the implications/repercussions of tourism for local culture. There is also agreement that cultural tourism is the most obvious and promising means to upgrade the Cycladic tourism product, promote the island destination, boost local/ regional economies and raise the cultural standards of their islands—in short,

enhance destination (cultural) sustainability. However, there is much room for improvement, based on the unfulfilled potential for cultural tourism growth and the potential benefit for tourism, culture, and the economy more generally—partnerships/ synergies are considered key to this prospect.

Synergies and partnerships within (cultural) tourism were reportedly very low, and mainly in organizing joint activities. Such cooperation among various tourism and other relevant businesses is not particularly favoured, except for servicing individual business goals. The emerging picture seems to be that of competition rather than cooperation.

Synergies and partnerships between the sectors of culture and tourism were also reportedly very low, although there seems to be general agreement that much potential lies in such cooperation.

Synergies and partnerships between the State and local/ regional entrepreneurship reveal an even worse picture, especially expressed from the business side. There is an absence of the State in culture and tourism planning/ development/ regulation/ legislation/ management (including cultural tourism). The State's misguided actions in combatting the pandemic (mainly through incidental financial assistance) and their repercussions are reportedly leading to an even more pronounced and grave loss of cultural traditions/ heritage, jobs and opportunities for further overall--as well as specific cultural--development. This shortcoming is especially felt, by all involved sides, in the sector of basic infrastructure provision (e.g. improvements to the road network, public transport provision), information provision to tourists (including destination publicity and marketing) and several other provisions relating to tourism promotion and attraction (i.e. organization of events/ attractions and monitoring of prices), as well as tourism education, support of visual and performing arts, the establishment of more family-oriented events and financial incentives for all of the above. As regards the transport sector, there are inadequacies and inefficiencies in inter- and intra-island connections, while during the off-peak season both locals and tourists have a very limited set of choices and rely mostly on public transport. The amelioration of the transport sector will result in the development not only of alternative and more locality-friendly forms of tourism but also develop a clientele that relies less on organized and package modes of travel.

Other synergies are also required from all involved sides. Bottom-up initiatives in culture and tourism are of utmost significance in the cooperative, participatory planning, management and implementation of actions/ goals/ visions, with the patronage and support of the authorities (at all levels), including funding and infrastructure provision. Visions for the future of culture and cultural tourism exist, but there is the risk that culture is becoming a tourism product; moreover, the pandemic has altered local priorities, shifting them towards more realistic goals of survival.

In light of the heightened awareness of **sustainable development and economic self-sufficiency**, the value and significance of protecting the physical environment, local character, architecture and cultural heritage of the islands are highly advocated, through imposing more restrictions on hotel constructions and other tourism infrastructure, as well as on mass/ package tourism. In this regard, the importance of further advertising and communicating the natural and cultural beauties of the Cyclades has been raised, in conjunction also with the urgency of regulating tourism flows ('over tourism in Santorini) in the islands. Further, 'greener', sustainable and 'alternative' (special interest/ purpose) tourism development, supported by emerging ICTs, seems to be highly favored.

All of these **problems and shortcomings in the area** require concerted and collaborative action. Municipalities have tended to play a very significant mediational role between entrepreneurship and society at large, on the one hand, and the State, on the other, with regard to cultural tourism development and relevant issues, as well as with improved cleanliness, accessibility, parking and public area Wifi provision.

2. Policy Implications and Recommendations

1. **The establishment and development of synergies and partnerships in all sectors of the economy and society** are deemed essential for any sustainable future growth and development of (cultural) tourism, towards local/ regional (tourism) development and societal well-being. These need to be initiated both from the **top down and from the bottom up**, but the role of the State is crucial and key to all such development.

2. **Governmental support**, funding and regulation of cultural activities, heritage and infrastructure are deemed essential in **local/ regional cultural tourism development**. In this regard, the following actions are needed: more (varied) historical and archaeological courses/ seminars, workshops and events; destination information and advertising up to the standard of the high level of cultural richness and heritage of the islands; improved visual and performing arts spaces/centres/galleries; and development of new cultural attractions/ sites/ events. Sustainable cultural management needs to be placed at the centre of responsible cultural tourism planning and management, through cooperation for heritage conservation among all relevant stakeholders, without compromising the islands' cultural integrity, economic independence and socioeconomic standard of living.

3. **State planning/ implementation/ management of new and existing infrastructures of all types, including transportation/ accessibility networks**. The development and/ or improvement of transport-related infrastructure, including public transport facilities, services and amenities, is imperative for the Cyclades, e.g., accessibility routes/ road construction and maintenance. Inter- and intra-island connections need to be improved and expanded, especially during the off-peak tourism season, with new road connections/ improvements made, and ferry-boat and other sea connections established with the mainland, beyond those with the Athens ports of Piraeus and Rafina.

4. **Further and more comprehensive governmental assistance to local/ regional enterprises,** in order to offset the impact of the pandemic and other crises. There is an overwhelming need and appeal for governmental tourism-related support, funding and regulation of tourism cultural activities, heritage preservation and promotion and investment in infrastructure, but especially for financial assistance for the local/ regional businesses, e.g. through reduced taxes, loans for investment, etc.

5. **Better local-/ regional- and national-level tourism promotion of the Cyclades** and/ or further development of their cultural activities and attractions are necessary towards their economic well-being, and thus their cultural and overall local sustainability. Tourist information ought to be available on public and local internet websites, as cultural events and festivals have tended to be promoted only by private initiatives/ advertisements and not publicly via i.e. The Greek Board of Tourism. Communication of information and advertising/ promotion needs to be further digitalized and broadly accessible, not just through conventional means (brochures, tourist information centres and fairs, etc.), but also through new and updated search engines, etc.

6. **The Greek State needs to instigate and monitor legislature as well as measures to facilitate the transition towards further sustainability in tourism and overall development in the Cyclades** as (cultural) tourism destinations, encompassing economic self-sufficiency, protection of the physical environment, local character, architecture, landscape, and cultural heritage of the islands, i.e. by imposing more restrictions on hotel construction and other tourism infrastructure, as well as on mass/ package tourism, in conjunction with regulation of tourism flows in the islands. 'Greener', sustainable and 'alternative' (special interest/ purpose), innovative/ creative and technologically-

upgraded forms of (cultural) tourism development, supported by emerging ICTs, ought to be thus established and promoted.

7. **General collaboration among all relevant parties (tourism-related businesses, the authorities and the cultural sector) is needed between top-down and bottom-up initiatives and monitoring,** in order for all above measures to take hold and operate. More specifically: Some measures need to be instigated from the top-down and require bottom-up collaboration, e.g. in local/ regional price regulation; in tourist flow controls and curbing the numbers of incoming tourists; in controlling tourism impacts on local culture, nature, landscape and the physical environment. Other measures need to be instigated from the bottom up, but cannot be carried out without the patronage and support of the authorities (at all levels), including funding and infrastructure provision, i.e. business operation/ growth; further development of cultural activities, arts venues, festivals and other attractions. Finally, some measures and initiatives need to be instigated, organized and implemented in tandem by both/ all sides involved, e.g. tourism vocational training for staff; information provision to tourists (including ICTs, social media and national campaigns); the digitalization of the tourism sector; and the embracing and establishment of Cyclades' culture as its local everyday practice and reality, safeguarded against becoming a tourism product.

8. **Municipalities need to be more assertive and supportive** as regards the significant mediational role they are called to play between entrepreneurship and society at large, on the one hand, and the State, on the other, with regard to cultural tourism development and all relevant issues. Besides improved cleanliness, accessibility, parking and public area Wifi provision, municipalities need to exert more effort in supporting the organization of cultural events and activities, by providing infrastructure, staff and/or funding to artists or cultural organizations and by organizing and establishing more children- and family-oriented venues and types of activities.

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6

PolicyBRIEF

Cultural Tourism for Community Engagement: The Case of Sant Pau Recinte Modernista

Brief for local policymakers

Author: University of Barcelona team

Introduction

Barcelona's international redevelopment and rebranding as an international tourism destination ahead of hosting the 1992 Olympic Games led the city to experience an exponential growth in visitor numbers and revenue in the decades leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, in 2019 the city of just over 1.6 million residents registered 9.47 million annual arrivals and 19.8 million overnight stays from visitors staying in hotels, without even contemplating the number of visitors staying in short-term tourist accommodations. As a result, Barcelona may clearly be identified as an over-touristed destination in the pre-pandemic years.

Tourism has long led to many positive externalities for the city, including increased economic development and employment opportunities in tourism and related sectors. In 2018, the tourism sector comprised 7.3% of the city's GDP and provided at least 95,256 jobs for those working directly in the sector, though if we consider the sector's spillover effects that number may actually be closer to 150,000 jobs. However, the shift toward mass tourism has also led to many negative consequences. Barcelona residents have registered complaints with tourism and its effects on the social landscape to some degree since at least 2010; this discontent peaked in 2017, when 15.6% of residents surveyed by the Barcelona City Council spontaneously

identified tourism as Barcelona's top problem. Residents have identified major issues with the leakage of economic benefits to international corporations, massification and the loss of access to public space, and increased complaints of noise, incivility, and littering. Ongoing gentrification and rising rents and housing prices have also been tied to tourism and the increasing prevalence of short-term vacation rentals.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic shocked the sector and halted both travel and tourism worldwide, with significant effects felt in Barcelona. 2020 visitor numbers fell to pre-Olympic levels, with just 2.1 million visitors (-77.8%) and 3.9 million overnight stays (-80.3%) registered by visitors staying in hotels. As a result, Barcelona's tourism sector suffered enormous losses in 2020 and saw only a tepid recovery in 2021. No clear strategic plan has yet emerged for tourism in the post-COVID future, though the current panorama presents a window of opportunity for Barcelona to re-think its relationship with tourism, privileging greater levels of social sustainability in the city.

Cultural tourism may play a key role in this socially sustainable recovery, given its strong rooting in the city's tourism trajectory. Cultural and architectural sites have made up a significant proportion of the most-visited tourist attractions in Barcelona throughout the past decade, with the city's historic Art Nouveau (Catalan Modernist) sites garnering regular and significant representation in the top-10 most-visited sites each year. The rise of the Art Nouveau movement in Barcelona developed simultaneously with the development of a new society and distribution of social power in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As the city expanded beyond its medieval walls, the new bourgeoisie exposed their wealth and power through the expression of art and architecture, which led to some of the city's most famous and enduring monuments. The Art Nouveau style also emerged in social projects, such as the Sant Pau Recinte Modernista, which was originally constructed as a public hospital and is the largest Art Nouveau complex in the city today. This brief will consider how Sant Pau Recinte Modernista is a key example of cultural tourism's potential for improving visitor-resident relations and community engagement in the over-touristed city of Barcelona.

1. Evidence and Analysis

Tourists' visiting habits in pre-pandemic years reflect a large interest in architecture, and particularly in Art Nouveau sites. The Sagrada Família Basilica and Park Güell, two monuments designed by the famed architect Antoni Gaudí, were the most-visited sites in Barcelona in 2019, attracting over 4.7 million and 3.1 million visitors, respectively. The list of the top-20 most-visited sites also includes two additional enclaves of Catalan Modernism, the Gaudí-designed houses Casa Batlló (No. 9) and La Pedrera (No.17), which each drew over one million visitors in 2019.

At the same time, **residents' perceptions of tourism show clear correlations with its growing presence**. As we may see in Figure 1 below, initial observations belie a strong belief that tourism is largely beneficial for the city, with percentages of residents that agree with this statement consistently hovering over 80% from 2007 to 2021.

However, from 2018 to the present, there has been a **decrease in residents who believe tourism is beneficial** for the city and **an increase in residents who consider it to be detrimental** (18.2% in 2021), as well as a marked rise in the number of residents who opted not to answer this question in 2019. The pandemic has not interrupted this growing trend of considering the negative effects of tourism, but rather has contributed to its pattern of rising by nearly two points almost every year.
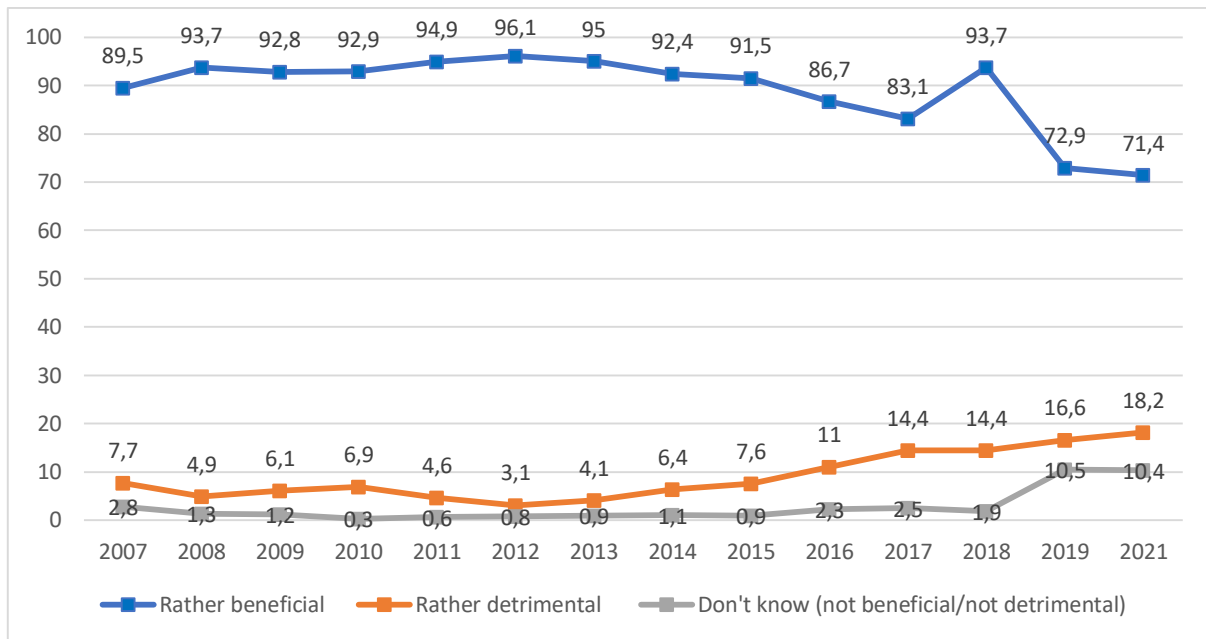
FIGURE 1: Evolution of the Perception of the Role of Tourism in Barcelona, 2007-2021 (%)

Source: Graphic from Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2021, p. 10.

In further analysis of these survey results, the University of Barcelona (UB) team found that **tourist-heavy neighborhoods are generally more critical of tourism's effects** on the city, with 65.4% of heavily-touristed neighborhoods seeing tourism as positive for their areas, compared to 72.9% of non-tourist neighborhoods. The amount of time spent living in the city or in one's neighborhood also affects residents' perceptions of whether tourism is beneficial. A difference of nearly 20 percentage points was found between those who have lived in the city between 6 months and 2 years (88.2%) versus those who have lived in the city their whole lives (68.2%). These results allow us to observe that **the more time residents live in Barcelona, the more critical their position becomes regarding tourism's impacts on the city.**

When asked about **the future of tourism**, 84.4% of respondents agreed that the city should take advantage of the current moment (during the pandemic, 2021) to initiate **changes in its management of tourism**. The most frequent suggestions for doing so were grouped along the lines of limiting and regulating (38.5%) or incrementing and diversifying (31.2%) the tourism on offer in the city. More concretely, residents cited a need to increase surveillance of uncivil tourism as their maximum priority, as well as attracting better-quality tourism with greater purchasing power and regulating or eliminating tourist apartments. Residents also concretely wished to **attract greater numbers of educational, professional, and sports and cultural tourists**, regardless of whether they live in touristic or non-touristic neighborhoods. This belief was reinforced in a survey carried out by the UB team with residents of the Eixample neighborhood in October 2020, as part of the SPOT project's fieldwork.

Given the shift in opinion toward greater management of tourism and embracing cultural tourists as part of the sector's (and city's) recovery, we believe that the confluence of these factors points toward the possibilities of cultural tourism to address the negative consequences of pre-COVID tourism and to help build a more sustainable pathway for the sector in the future. However, not every cultural tourism attraction will produce inherently positive results. Cultural tourism sites must embrace innovation and give much greater thought to the ways they engage with the local community, not just international visitors.

The Sant Pau Recinte Modernist provides a compelling example of how these sites may respect local residents and improve community engagement while still generating economic benefits through tourism.

FIGURE 2: SANT PAU RECINTE MODERNISTA. Photo credit: Saara Mildeberg

The **Sant Pau Recinte Modernista** is the largest of Barcelona's Art Nouveau sites, comprised of a complex with multiple pavilions and extensive gardens designed by the architect Lluís Domenech i Montaner in 1902. It was opened to the public in 1920, upon its completion. The institution's vocation for serving the community stems from its origins as a public hospital serving less privileged members of Barcelona's society. After 80 years of service, the hospital moved to a new building at the rear of the complex in 2009, at which time the complex carried out widescale restorations to several of its buildings before opening to the public as a tourist attraction in 2016. Prior restorations of its Modernist pavilions earned the complex UNESCO World Heritage Status in 1997.

Today, the Recinte Modernista has become a reference in Barcelona for being an institution that is deeply engaged with the local community. It is the only one of the many Art Nouveau sites open to the public that is not under fully private ownership, but is instead managed by the Hospital Santa Creu i Sant Pau Private Foundation, which is made up of the Chapter of Barcelona Cathedral, the Barcelona City Council, and the Catalan regional government (Generalitat de Catalunya). Certainly, this **hybrid (public-private) management** plays a central role in the complex's dedication to community engagement, since the venture is not entirely for-profit and is still strongly tied to the presently functioning Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau.

The foundation manages the key projects that currently comprise the Recinte Modernista's **Social Program**, which, as we may see in Figure 3, has a strong focus on the social return generated by its tourist and cultural activity, attention to the most vulnerable social collectives in the city, and the sustainable management of its cultural heritage space. The complex is heavily engaged with projects and activities that aim to improve the sociocultural fabric of the city, particularly by offering free visitor access to children, young people at risk of exclusion, foster families, social services, schools, and other collectives in need of special attention. The addition of several Open Days allows any resident to visit the complex for free on the first Sunday of each month or on the city's special celebration of Sant Jordi (April 23). It also offers free rentals of its private spaces for organizations that serve vulnerable collectives, thus removing one important obstacle for these organizations to meet, exchange knowledge, and carry out their work.
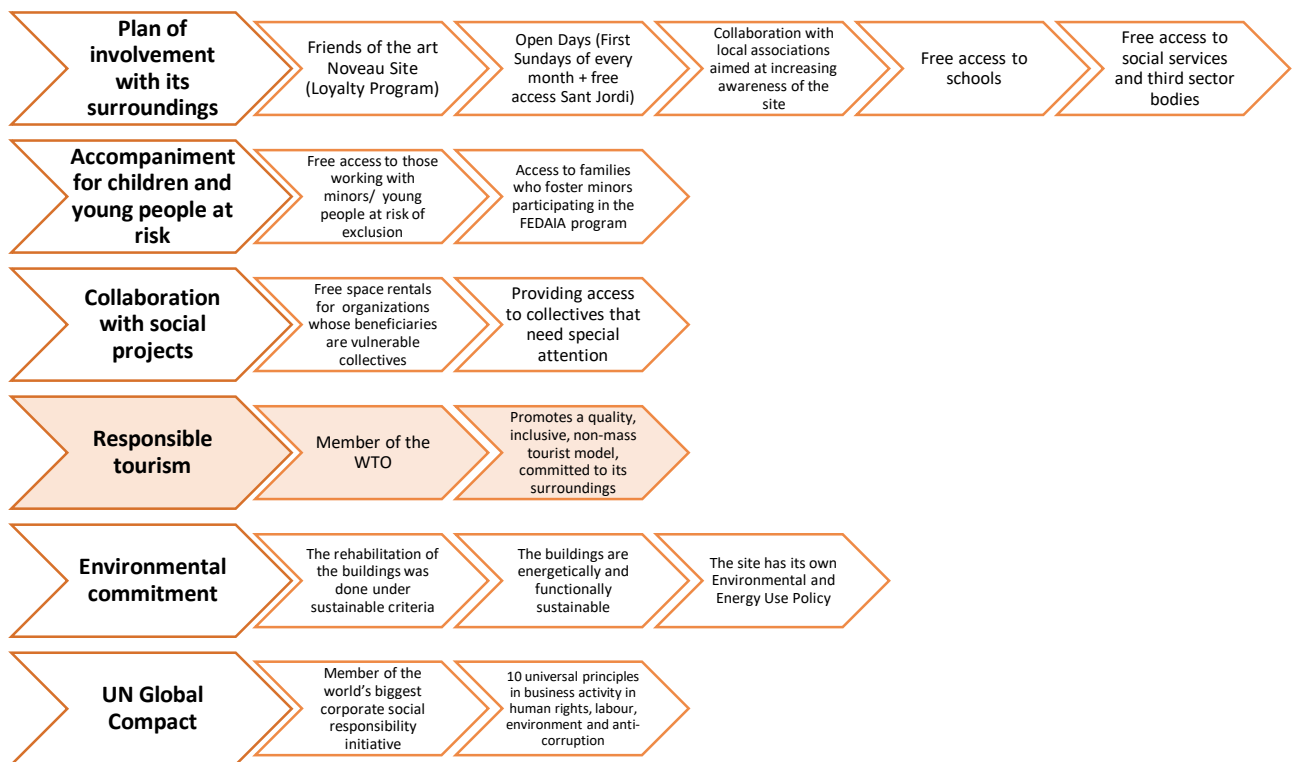
Plan of involvement with its surroundings	Friends of the art Noveau Site (Loyalty Program)	Open Days (First Sundays of every month + free access Sant Jordi)	Collaboration with local associations aimed at increasing awareness of the site	Free access to schools	Free access to social services and third sector bodies
Accompaniment for children and young people at risk	Free access to those working with minors/ young people at risk of exclusion	Access to families who foster minors participating in the FEDAIA program			
Collaboration with social projects	Free space rentals for organizations whose beneficiaries are vulnerable collectives	Providing access to collectives that need special attention			
Responsible tourism	Member of the WTO	Promotes a quality, inclusive, non-mass tourist model, committed to its surroundings			
Environmental commitment	The rehabilitation of the buildings was done under sustainable criteria	The buildings are energetically and functionally sustainable	The site has its own Environmental and Energy Use Policy		
UN Global Compact	Member of the world's biggest corporate social responsibility initiative	10 universal principles in business activity in human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption			

FIGURE 3: Sant Pau Recinte Modernista's Social Program: Strategic Lines and Actions, 2022

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on information from the Sant Pau Recinte Modernista website, 2022.

In terms of its direct engagement with the tourism sector, the Recinte maintains its commitment to the principles of responsibility and sustainability in tourism through its connection to the **World Tourism Organization (WTO),** as well as being a recipient of the **Biosphere Certificate from the Responsible Tourism Institute (RTI).** This certificate confirms the complex's fulfilment of responsible, environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive, and accessible activities. The foundation that manages this certificate launched a manifesto called the Responsible Tourism Policy in 2016, in which its members commit to managing their activities sustainably by adopting strategies and actions aimed at preventing, reducing, or eliminating both the internal and external impacts of their facilities and activities, as well as optimizing their locations' sustainability through improved environmental performance. The Recinte has promised to fulfill all these requirements and more, hence meeting the Biosphere's standards for regulating tourism activity and its impacts.

Another significant component of the Recinte's commitment to responsible tourism is its direct reference to promoting "a **quality, inclusive, non-mass tourist model" that is "committed to its surroundings"**. This strategic line goes a step further than its WTO and Biosphere regulations, confirming not only its commitment to community engagement and fair access in its surrounding neighborhoods (and the city at large), but also its commitment to operating under a more just, inclusive, and intentional tourism model that rejects massification while celebrating the complex's unique cultural heritage.

Such a commitment is evident in the **visitor experience**, which is designed and executed in a manner that is clearly meant to appeal to **both local and international visitors**. The use of the dual local languages, Catalan and Spanish, is prevalent along with English translations in all the texts and video subtitles that comprise the visual tour. In addition, the local community and its history is built into the visitor experience from the start, with the first stop on the visitor route being an immersive video explaining the hospital complex's history

and ending with a variety of local residents proudly claiming (in Catalan and Spanish): "I was born at Sant Pau." The tour continues over several floors containing large text explanations of the hospital's history, as well as background on the complex's architect, Lluís Domenech i Montaner. This focus on the complex's social and medical history foregrounds the later experience of its impressive Modernist pavilions and extensive grounds, a strategy that seems to privilege local history and scientific and cultural heritage over more internationally celebrated aspects like its UNESCO World Heritage status. Such an approach not only keeps the local community and its history at the forefront of visitors' minds, but also rejects the idea of massification.

Finally, the Recinte also maintains several **internal and external programs for education and knowledge exchange.** First, the complex has an Education Service program that further strengthens its commitment to the community by disseminating the work of Domenech i Montaner in educational programs adapted to a variety of learning levels. Second, the complex has also opened its doors to a variety of organizations with high social impact, providing them not only physical spaces to work on a diverse array of projects in the spheres of sustainability, health, education, culture, and innovation, but also opportunities for knowledge exchange and collaboration.

2.   Policy Implications and Recommendations

From centering local history and cultural heritage in the visitor experience to its commitment to education and knowledge exchange and the wider products of its social program, the Sant Pau Recinte Modernista engages in many best practices that demonstrate its suitability as a model for future cultural tourism efforts wishing to be more socially sustainable and engaged with the local community.

Of course, this model is not perfectly reproducible at every scale. Smaller or privately funded organizations may not have as much space at their disposal, nor as much financial support backing their activities, and thus it may be harder for them to offer the wide range of social programs and activities the Recinte currently offers. However, many aspects of this model are indeed likely to be easily transferrable to other cultural tourism entities, whether big or small, in Barcelona or in other heavily touristed cities.

As the Sant Pau Recinte Modernista illustrates well, the tourism sector's goal for the future is not to stymy international tourism, but rather to include greater community engagement efforts in the models of tourism already being practiced, a goal which seems particularly well-suited to cultural tourism and heritage sites.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS:

1.   Over-touristed cities experiencing the negative social consequences of tourism should actively invest in **cultural tourism initiatives designed to renew community engagement** or improve sociocultural sustainability, as the Sant Pau Recinte Modernista model illustrates well.

2.   Improving the sustainability of the tourism sector requires cultural tourism sites to center a more **comprehensive type of sustainability** (not only economic, but also social, cultural, and environmental) in both their missions and their actions if they wish to benefit all stakeholders.

3.   The tourism sector should not lose sight of the contributions of **local and "proximity" tourists** in the post-COVID future. Instead, it should continue to attract them and to place even greater emphasis on adapting the tourism on offer to their specific interests and needs by allowing them to participate in the development of local tourism agendas.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CULTURAL TOURISM ENTITIES:

1. Subscribe to **principles of sustainability, inclusivity, and responsible tourism** from the outset, or remodel mission statements to fit these new goals.

2. Begin to **integrate smaller elements of community engagement into touristic products** immediately— such as offering special admissions prices or free access to local residents— rather than waiting years to unveil larger-scale transformations.

3. Adapt the visitor experience to include a greater focus on the **local community, history and cultural heritage.** This likely requires only slight changes that generate large returns in terms of community engagement.

4. Consider reserving a portion of the organization's economic benefits to **give back to the local community**, through initiatives such as creating and funding educational programs in local schools or offering free space rentals for community groups serving collectives in need, in order to improve the social return of cultural tourism activities.
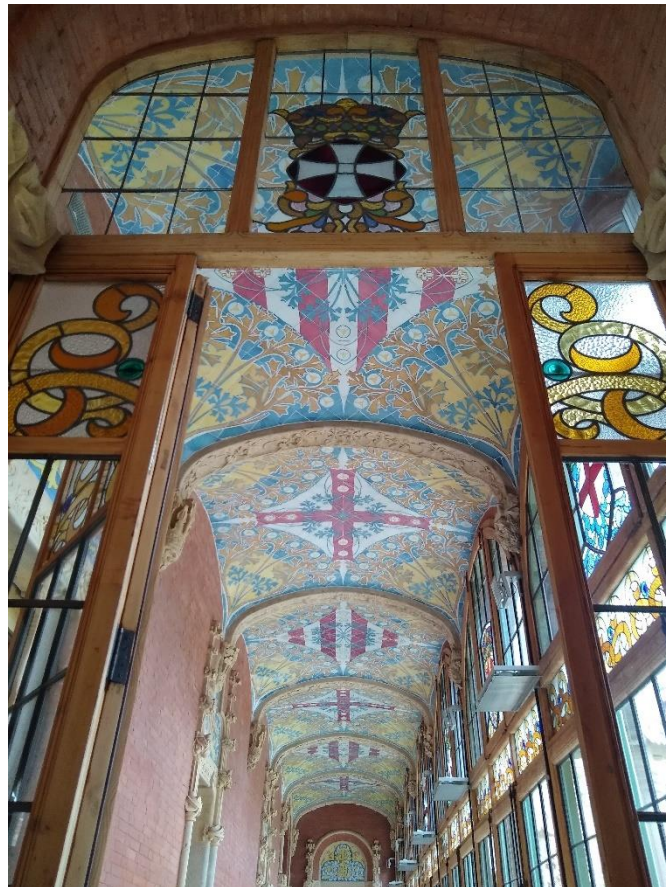

FIGURE 4: SANT PAU RECINTE MODERNISTA. Photo Credit: Danielle Bishop

Project Identity

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8

ITALY

POLICY BRIEF

SPOT
SOCIAL AND INNOVATIVE PLATFORM
ON CULTURAL TOURISM
AND ITS POTENTIAL TOWARDS
DEEPENING EUROPEANISATION

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October 2022 | SPOT Policy Brief #24

The vision of tourism *and* the vision of culture in Piedmont

For a balanced valorisation of cultural tourism

Authors: UNIVR team

Introduction

Alba and the surrounding areas of Langhe and Roero were subjects of a case study for the EU-funded SPOT cultural tourism project.

Data collection and documentation for the SPOT project work package were committed to collecting secondary data from institutional documents and databases and preparing a series of questionnaires on case study stakeholders. To collect data, a survey was carried out in 2020 on tourists, residents and cultural and tourist entrepreneurs.

Led by the SPOT project team dedicated to Policy, Practices and Strategy, a series of analyses on national, regional and local policy documents was carried out in 2020 and twice updated in 2021, in consideration of Italian national political changes in the institutional organisation of tourism. In 2021, four round tables were conducted with the local key stakeholders in the sectors of tourism, culture, and other tourism-related activities in the area of Langhe Monferrato and Roero area to identify avenues for improvements in cultural tourism.

All these activities took place in Italy amid intermittent lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic. This situation certainly affected the UNIVR team's findings. Nevertheless, the pandemic, otherwise dramatic, provided the opportunity to understand the importance of tourism from an economic and social point of view and increase the knowledge base at national, European and international levels.

The relevant policy problem observed using different instruments (surveys, round tables, researchers' observations and interviews) as part of the SPOT project concerns a factual connection between tourism and culture in the regional government division (which is also appointed to sport), but a segmented action in policies' definition is reflected in likewise segmentation of tourism and culture public funding.

1. Evidence and Analysis

In Italy, tourism is mainly managed at a regional level. In 2021, the Ministry of Tourism was created to assist the sector through different centralised financial support tools. Further, a strategy-setting conference will be conducted at the end of October 2022. If the former Ministry of Culture and Tourism was an institutional combination favourable for a solid framework to improve cultural tourism, the actual (in September 2022) Ministry considers the entire sector to be a strategic industry. Foreign promotion of Italian tourism's image is implemented through the ENIT (the National Tourism Agency), which is a public body under the control of the Ministry of Tourism but formerly it was the control of the the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Management and promotion of destinations are still strategic actions carried out at the regional level. Despite this, an ambiguous way of handling the relationships between culture and tourism is recognised by interviewed stakeholders, who reported little expertise in the development of tourism and culture. These are perceived as bounded sectors in the actual regional division of Piedmont.

The policy problems here described are due to both circumstances and structural reasons. The consequences of this unprecedented pandemic must be taken into consideration when assigning legal deadlines and implementing political changes in regional government and public bodies. Some structural reasoning must be adopted for the Italian organisation (and continuous reorganisation) of the cultural sector and conservation institutions: during the first SPOT project, it was strictly connected to the tourism sector, while it was later attributed to the specific ministry. In particular, two aspects have been identified that are major factors for the development of cultural tourism:

At both regional and local levels, the agencies appointed to the task of tourism policy formulation have witnessed leadership changes after the most problematic year of the pandemic, 2020. Even if accountability and programming have been guaranteed along the vacancies at both regional and local levels by the technical staff of a very high level, a clear strategic and long-term vision still lacks (at the moment of writing in September 2022).

At regional level, during the SPOT project data collection, the cultural heritage sector emerged as fragmented, largely reflecting the public/private sector divide, which is quite characteristic in the Italian context, where propriety, conservation and presentation depend on different institutional (sometimes private) bodies. Despite this, the commitment of civil society, associations and foundations is strong enough to promote projects in the cultural creative sector. They collaborate with local bodies for cultural heritage management and valorisation expositions, for organising festivals and performances and promoting strategic assets. Further considerations could not apply because the culture program for the three-year period of 2022–2024 (Deliberazione 5 luglio 2022, n. 227 – 13907) largely deals with some of the SPOT project evidence on this topic.

2. Policy Implications and Recommendations

In the tourism sector, **the mid-term vision expressed in 2018 should be reassessed in light of the pandemic and produce a longer-term vision**, considering European Green Deal policies and more balanced promotion of different regional cultural specificities.

Similar to the tourist sector, where a specific body provides the knowledge of the whole sector and oversees its promotion, in the cultural sector, **a general direction to the management and economy of the cultural sector should be provided in order to achieve a greater and systematic knowledge of little and very little cultural initiatives** in the field of history, intangible cultural heritage and traditional festivities, where residents are mostly involved.

This could be considered **preparatory work for the creation of networks** (for instance, among local museums, non-profit associations or several interest groups committed to cultural heritage valorisation) and the exchange of good practices among different districts in the region, based on the involvement of both the younger and elder generations with a view of long-life learning and inclusive activities.

FIGURE 1: "The cultural landscapes of the Piedmont vineyards provide outstanding living testimony to winegrowing and winemaking traditions that stem from a long history, and that have been continuously improved and adapted up to the present day" (Criterion iii of the Vineyard Landscape of Piedmont: Langhe-Roero and Monferrato inscription into the UNESCO World Heritage Site List, 2014). Picture by Giovanna Rech (2022).

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4

Potentials and problems of Langhe, Monferrato and Roero excellence

For local policymakers and stakeholders

Authors: UNIVR team

Introduction

Alba and the surrounding areas of Langhe and Roero were subjects of a case study for the EU-funded SPOT cultural tourism project.

In the case study area, named in Project Piedmont Landscape and Literary Park, cultural tourism has been contributing to the diversification of the local economy since the late 1980s, thereby making it a strategic and considerable economic and social sector until the pandemic. The area was already developed from an industrial, rural and economic point of view. In Alba and its neighbouring territory, industrial production and agriculture were both sources of employment and wealth for the local population. In the last decades, rural activities and related jobs with low skills have been more and more ensured by foreign and immigrant manpower, while real estate price in the whole area has significantly grown.

A survey on tourists, residents and cultural and tourist entrepreneurs was carried out in 2020. In 2021, four round tables with local relevant key stakeholders in tourism, culture, and other tourism-related activities and with mayors of municipalities involved in the UNESCO site of Piedmont Vineyard of Langhe-Roero and Monferrato were conducted to identify avenues of improvements in cultural tourism. These activities took

place amid intermittent lockdowns in Italy due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This situation definitively affected the UNIVR team's findings.

During the SPOT project running, a relevant policy problem was observed using different instruments (surveys, round tables, researchers' observations and interviews). At both regional and local levels, tourism is increasingly being considered an industry based on tangible and intangible cultural resources, but these resources must be handled differently, considering tourism's social sustainability from a medium-term perspective. At the regional level, the lack of a coordinated vision of tourism in the light of specific local cultural assets and resources is elsewhere addressed (see UNIVR_PB_1). At the local level, from the point of view of cultural tourism proposals and heritage management, the multiplicity of cultural and organisational layers must be carefully considered and their interplay negotiated among stakeholders belonging to public, private, civil society and third sectors.

1. Evidence and Analysis

The pandemic break and its overall consequences are particularly distinct in the case study area. In Italy, since Spring 2022, restrictions due to the pandemic have been gradually and completely removed. Subsequently, the case study area has been experiencing an improved wealth of cultural and tourist activities.

Firstly, the reason is the return to the events and festivals without limits to the number of attending people, to the extent that the sector seems to be returned to the pre-pandemic conditions or even to a greater inflow of visitors for long-lasting events in the area, such as literary, music and gastronomic festivals.

Secondly, big events are linked to both the cultural and wine and food sectors. In particular, the intangible cultural sector of literature in Alba and in the Langhe area is largely benefitting from the extended hiatus of the pandemic owing to the potential of the local cultural assets, especially in the literary resources of the major writers Beppe Fenoglio and Cesare Pavese. The Centenary of the writer Beppe Fenoglio's birth (1 March 2022 – 1 March 2023) led by the Centro Studi Beppe Fenoglio is an opportune event to produce new knowledge and develop connections among different arts, performative or figurative, and creative industries. Constraints due to the pandemic pushed the Fondazione Cesare Pavese to realise and use audio-visual products to enlarge and illustrate the writer's roots through places narratives and testimonials.

The excellence of the wine sector and its tourism potential was recognized, among many other ways, by hosting in Alba the 6th UNWTO Global Conference on Wine Tourism in September (19–21 September 2022). If the wine sector is an affluent economic sector, its implications for cultural comprehension and local identity perception pass through the landscape.

Based on the two-year research previously conducted, it could be affirmed that tourism is very different and, in the area, is recovering to the pre-pandemic levels or higher. All the territory of Langhe, Roero and Monferrato has been gaining greater visibility due to the work done by local public administration and interested associations to improve citizens' awareness of distinctions and designations earned in the last decade. This acted towards the excellence stated through the success in two participatory processes which resulted in the UNESCO recognitions, in the World Heritage List of Piedmont Vineyard Landscape of Langhe-Roero and Monferrato and in the Creative Network of Cities for the Gastronomy of Alba. The agro-tertiary sector of wine production and restaurants is recognised and documented nationally and internationally, deeming this sector as the main lever for tourism, services and connected industries.

At the local level, tourism has been reorganised after the fusion of two local destination management organisations, which took place between 2020 and 2021 and, in fact, clearly stated the need to present the

area of Langhe Monferrato and Roero as a unique destination on the tourist market. Food and wine are the unifying and strongest lever of this area, but what is evident after the SPOT research is that under the production of excellent wines and high-level gastronomy, there is the rural landscape and its management from an environmental, social and cultural point of view. Landscape needs and feeds on complex governance that may be established not only at the national but also at the regional and local levels.

These general considerations are based on several research results and here are illustrated the most telling ones.

Residents' and tourist businesses' attitudes towards the number of tourists

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Perception of the number of tourists in the area is an important item to indirectly test if the local population and the enterprises in the tourist sector have a clear idea of the case study area crowding (and indirectly vocations to tourism).
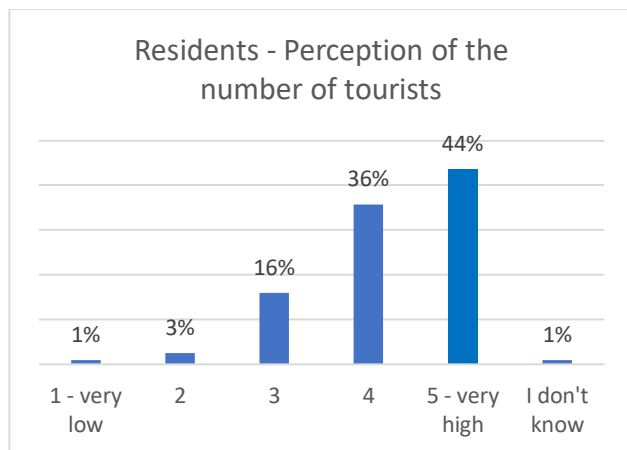
Graphic 1. Residents: perception of the number of tourists in the area (N=400). Source: Survey on stakeholders (2020)
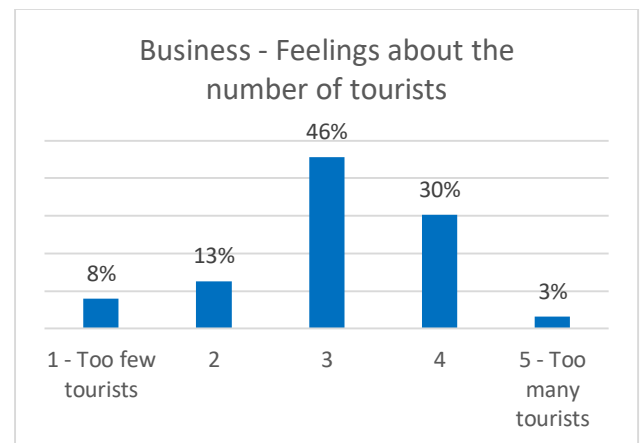
Graphic 2. Business: feelings about the number of tourists visiting their business every year (N=215). Source: Survey on stakeholders (2020)

What visitors value according to local businesses and cultural institutions

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Local stakeholders in the tourist sector consider mostly important for their visitors to get a taste of the local culture and traditions in the area, spending a considerable part of the visit time in cultural attractions, site or events. They consider themselves a good source of recommendations for tourists, confirming the tourists' trust in them.

Graphic 3. Business: Visitors' attitude in the local business and cultural institutions' opinion

2. Policy Implications and Recommendations

Stakeholders involved in 2020 surveys and 2021 roundtables highlighted the timely ambition to cope with two characteristics of tourism in the case study area: seasonality and visitors' short stays. First, the seasonality is quite high to the extent of becoming an over-touristic destination during the Autumn, especially during the weekends, because of seasonal events and holidays. Directly connected to this and to the concentration of tourist demand for high-quality wine and food products, there is the need for a diversified offer that pushes the visitors to stay longer in the area and visit more decentralised villages without traffic congestion which could often occur in these minor places.

The area is already very well developed, but some adaptations could further lead local society to reflect on their tourist lifecycle and their mid-term future, especially in the direction of a more inclusive offer for visitors and greater involvement of residents in the territory narration. Some suggestions are as follows:

1. From an infrastructural point of view, reaching the case study area and exploring the different places and villages is still quite difficult without private (or rented) vehicles, and the public transport network is still being reorganised (at the moment of writing this paper). A more sustainable transport system goes beyond the local-level direct powers but represents an important stake to be endorsed for a greener and lower carbon-producing mobility, starting from the network of footpaths and cycle paths.

2. From a practical point of view, extending cultural itineraries to connect decentralised and rural areas to more mainstream cultural heritage and information sources would contribute to balancing the visitors' crowd. In this area, it could be beneficial to connect the different routes present in the area under a coordinated image, for instance, inspired by the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There is a large space for proposals inspired by the different cultural resources, such as wine and vineyards and their importance for landscape shaping, literature and literary real or imaginary places, historical stratifications from the Roman period to the World War II memories and the economic boom of the mid-twentieth century led by industrial expansion.

3. To be more inclusive from a social point of view, creating the possibilities of events and festivals lead to the celebration and spread of culture at all levels, that is, the Culture (explicitly intended big C) intended as the high culture of classical and contemporary arts, history, literature and excellent know-how skills and the culture intended in its popular, vernacular, folk, ancient, holistic (or other specific) modes.

4. To foster the involvement of residents and local people in events, festivals and visits to local cultural institutions (for instance, museums, castles and monuments) not only through the support of educational paths in schools but also with specific discounts for residents.

5. To support a reflective and either inclusive approach to local recent history, social situation and its transformational capabilities, some chapters of the local community's past and present are a difficult heritage or onerous condition that deserves to be carefully handled but locally dealt with by, from the Partisan War during the Nazi-fascist occupation in the World War II to the methanol affair in the wine production in the 1980s, to the actual efforts of social integration of immigrants whose work is necessary for many tasks in the primary sector.

FIGURE 1. The Landscape of Langhe. Picture by Giovanna Rech (2021)

FIGURE 2. Alba (CN) Cathedral of San Lorenzo. Picture by Giovanna Rech (2021)

FIGURE 3. The Castle of Grinzane Cavour (CN): the built component of UNESCO site, the first Regional Winehouse of Piedmont and the In Vigna Open-air Museum. Picture by Lorenzo Migliorati (2020)

FIGURE 4. Belvedere point on the Barbaresco hills, Neive (CN). Picture by Giovanna Rech (2022)

FIGURE 5. La Vigna dei Pastelli, Coazzolo (AT). Picture by Giovanna Rech (2021)

FIGURE 6. S. Benedetto Belbo (CN). The centenary of Beppe Fenoglio's birth. Picture by Chiara Pini (2022)

FIGURE 7. The Cesare Pavese Foundation. Santo Stefano Belbo (CN). Picture: courtesy of Fondazione Cesare Pavese website

FIGURE 8. Piazza Rossetti 1. Installation for the Centenary of Beppe Fenoglio's birth. Alba (CN). Picture by Giovanna Rech (2022)

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	University of Aberdeen, United Kingdom
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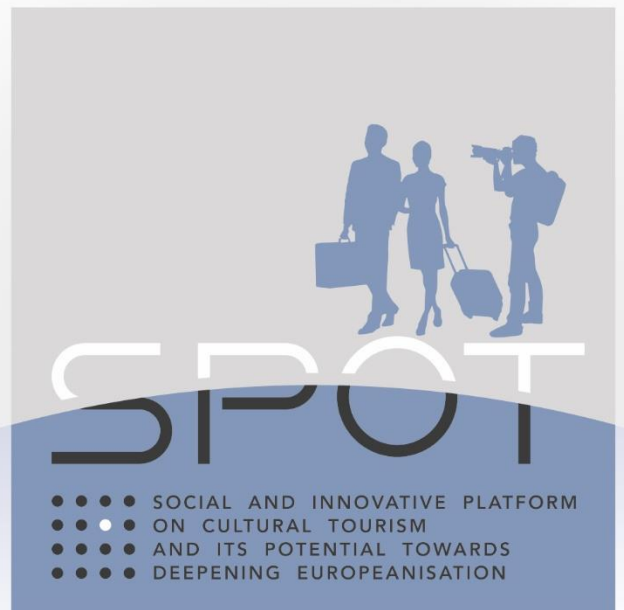
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9

POLAND

PolicyBRIEF

SPOT
SOCIAL AND INNOVATIVE PLATFORM
ON CULTURAL TOURISM
AND ITS POTENTIAL TOWARDS
DEEPENING EUROPEANISATION

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Cultural Tourist Route – Valley of Palaces and Gardens

For local policymakers For local stakeholders in cultural tourism development

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Introduction

The Valley of Palaces and Gardens is a Lower Silesian cultural route, located in the Western Sudetes in the Jeleniogórska Basin, and within the surrounding mountain ranges. Its distinctive feature is the combination of a rich and multicultural material heritage with a naturally varied mountain landscape. Here one can find knightly and noble residences of numerous kinds, ranging from medieval residential towers, castles, and Renaissance mansions, Baroque palaces to 19th-century palace and park complexes. This is the largest European complex of palaces and castles after the Rhineland castles. Eleven historic buildings along with park complexes, due to their superior artistic level and historical value, were recognized by the President of the Republic of Poland in 2011 as a Monument of History and inscribed on this prestigious list of tangible heritage under the name: *Palaces and Landscape Parks of the Jeleniogórska Valley.*

The area of research conducted within the framework of the international research project SPOT (*Social and innovative Platform on Cultural Tourism and its potential towards deepening Europeanization*) was limited to the territory of two municipalities: Mysłakowice and Janowice Wielkie. A total of twelve historic residences from the route of the Valley of Palaces and Gardens are located on their area, including as many as seven recognized as the Monuments of History. In addition to palace and park complexes, other cultural assets are located in the study area, including, among others, secular and sacred buildings, as well as technical and industrial facilities, and numerous commemoration sites.

The SPOT project, which is being implemented from 2020 to 2022 and funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 program, aims to develop a new approach to understanding and shaping cultural tourism, including promoting the development of socioeconomically disadvantaged areas.

The Grand Palace in Łomnica

The Wojanów Palace

There are a number of local community benefits associated with the development of cultural tourism:

1) stimulation of entrepreneurship and increased income levels in the local economy,
2) creation of new jobs,
3) increased income of municipalities from taxes on tourism and tourism-related businesses,
4) increased diversification of the local economy allowing to reduce vulnerability to economic volatility,
5) the possibility of all-year-round operation of tourist economy entities, as opposed to areas dominated by recreational values, characterized by a strong seasonality of tourist traffic,
6) improvement of the external image of the tourist area,
7) increased knowledge of tangible and intangible heritage among the local community,,
8) increased awareness of the cultural identity of the local community,
9) development of activities related to the protection and preservation of regional cultures and cultural assets (tangible and intangible),
10) strengthening the integration of the local community through joint activities.

As part of the SPOT project, the following scientific activities were carried out:

➢ field research aimed at identifying and assessing cultural assets in terms of their of their significance for the development of cultural tourism;

➢ identification and assessment of other determinants of the development of cultural tourism;

➢ surveys of tourists visiting the case study area;

➢ surveys of inhabitants of the communes: Mysłakowice and Janowice Wielkie;

➢ surveys of entrepreneurs conducting tourist and / or cultural activity in the case study area;

➢ individual in-depth interviews with key stakeholders in the development of cultural tourism at the local and regional level.

1. Evidence and Analysis

All surveyed groups of respondents unanimously assessed **the attractiveness of the case study area** for cultural tourism as being high. It consists of the values of material culture presented in the Introduction, as well as attractive landscape values and the low level of urbanization of the municipalities, "peace and tranquility" that allows combining recreation with visiting cultural attractions.

A gradual change in the mentality of the local community, which, unlike the first displaced persons of the post-war period, no longer disavows the German past of this area and is beginning to recognize **the value of the entire cultural heritage**, shaped in this region also in the period before World War II. This fosters the emergence of a number of interesting initiatives among the local community, strengthening the basis for the development of cultural tourism. These include the development of traditional regional products, as well as the organization of cultural events and tourist ventures relating to the region's history.

Important attributes of the area also include attention to traditions and the celebration of Polish customs characteristic of the rural population, which take place thanks to, among other things, the thriving activities of local housewives' clubs, the local action group and other local associations, as well as the activities of local governments.

The development of **agritourism** in the study area allows for a much-needed expansion of the accommodation offer, aimed mainly at the individual, less affluent tourist.

According to the surveyed residents and entrepreneurs in the tourism services sector, as well as all the interviewed stakeholders, there is still **a large and untapped potential of the area** for the development of cultural tourism, with which, at the same time, the respondents associate a number of benefits for the socio-economic development of the entire region, as well as the residents themselves. In their opinion: "Cultural tourism is one such form that brings more benefits than negative effects".

However, the current level of cultural tourism development in the study area compared to other regions of Poland can be described as relatively low. This is related to the existing **number of barriers**. In the course of the conducted research, factors limiting the development of cultural tourism, occurring in the study area, were identified, which include, among others:

➢ lack of well-developed tourist and paratourist infrastructure, including, in particular: hiking and bicycle trails, diversified accommodation and catering facilities, adapted to the needs of different groups of tourists, lack of a tourist information point and appropriate information-educational materials along tourist trails and at cultural attractions, underdevelopment of accompanying facilities: toilets, parking lots, sidewalks, etc;

➢ poor accessibility of individual destinations by public transportation;

➢ poor accessibility of individual destinations by public transport;

➢ the presence of decapitated monuments; the low degree of care for existing monuments, as well as the ineffective system of their protection, an example of which is the acquiescence in the destruction of the historic linen industry plant "Orzeł" in Mysłakowice by the new owner;

➢ lack of well-developed tourist infrastructure and lack of recognition of the potential of the analyzed area in planning and strategic documents of the supra-local level; the main emphasis in them is placed on the neighbouring Karkonosze Mountains, while forgetting about the municipalities lying in their vicinity;

➢ underdeveloped cooperation in the field of cultural tourism between local authorities, tourism entrepreneurs and NGOs, resulting in, among other things, very few joint promotional activities of the entire study area and the lack of creation of common comprehensive tourism products.

2. Policy Implications and Recommendations

In order to further advance cultural tourism in the study area, a number of measures need to be taken. The current document will propose only one solution, the necessity of which is dictated both by the results of surveys of all groups of respondents, the results of interviews with key stakeholders, and is also the result of an in-depth analysis of existing conditions in the study area. Its primary objective is **the sustainable development of cultural tourism** in the study area, raising the level of socio-economic development in the region and benefiting the local community first and foremost. However, the proposed measure will require the involvement of all stakeholders in the development of this form of tourism activity and their development of long-term cooperation.

The action recommended by us in the case study area is
INFORMATION INTEGRATION OF THE CULTURAL ROUTE OF THE VALLEY OF PALACES AND GARDENS

An ideal solution would be to cover the entire route of the Valley of Palaces and Gardens with information integration, but due to the large area where the key tourist attractions are located and the high number of stakeholders, this may be a difficult task. Therefore, we recommend starting the implementation of this action from the areas of the two neighbouring rural communes of Mysłakowice and Janowice Wielkie.

The aim of **the first stage of information integration** is to create a virtual platform (website) that will present the following content:

1) **A map** with all cultural attractions and the most important natural assets located in the area; the map should also present the location of the entire tourist infrastructure, including point objects (e.g., accommodation facilities) and linear objects (e.g., hiking and bicycle trails), as well as the locations of other services important to the tourist (e.g., a post office, ATM, a health center); we strongly recommend creating a map of an interactive nature, allowing the user to obtain (by clicking on an icon on the map) more detailed information about a given object or service;

2) **Information about the geographical environment**, both its natural and socio-economic elements; it is recommended to enrich this part with maps, charts, diagrams and, above all, infographics, which will present the most important content in a professional, but at the same time understandable and visually attractive way; it is worth including links to websites presenting the issues in a more comprehensive way (e.g. addresses of sites: Lower Silesian Association of Landscape Parks, Central Register of Forms of Nature Conservation, Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Wrocław, etc.);

3) **Information on the history of the area**, which should be accompanied by historical maps and numerous archival photographs;

4) **Information** presenting the history and current functions **of all cultural assets**, attractive to tourists with various interests and backgrounds; the information should be presented in an easy-to-understand manner and enriched with illustrative material, if possible both historical and contemporary; it is also important to provide practical information on the availability of the object and possible costs associated with visiting it; it is worth including links to websites related to the cultural attraction;

5) **Presentation of all cultural events**, as well as (secondarily) events of a different nature, such as recreational or sports; with a clear indication of cyclicity, the nature of the event, the place and time of the event, the cost of participation in the event and a link to the organizer's website;

6) **Information on accommodation facilities and services**; the subpage should contain information about the services offered (type, standard, number of rooms and beds), address details, reference to the map, contact details of the owners / managers of the facility (including links to websites that allow you to book online or by phone); it is also recommended to present information that proves that services are being provided in accordance with the principles of sustainable development;

7) **Information on catering facilities and services**; the subpage should contain a short description of each facility, including data on the type of services (all-year-round, seasonal), the type of cuisine and dishes served, the number of places in the premises; as well as address (together with a link to an interactive map) and contact details; it is also recommended to present information that proves the implementation of services in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, including information on cooperation with local food producers (and which ones - promotion of local producers), whether its offer includes regional cuisine;

8) **Information on external accessibility**, presenting the possibilities of accessing the tourist area by various means of transport;

9) **Information on internal accessibility**, presenting the possibilities of moving by various means of transport between cultural attractions and other tourist facilities inside the tourist area, including information about MZK Jelenia Góra (local public transport), transport services of private entrepreneurs, but also about the possibilities of moving in the most environmentally friendly way, i.e. on foot and by bike;

10) **Information on guide services**, presenting profiles of licensed tour guides and their contact details;

11) **Information on other facilities and services** important for both a one-day visitor and a tourist wishing to spend more days in the area, e.g. data on retail outlets, including grocery stores, shops offering the regional products, souvenirs, maps and guides, tourist equipment, etc., the location of tourist information points, the location of public toilets, etc.;

12) Information about the current weather, with particular emphasis on the current rainfall situation and meteorological threats; it would be advisable to install at several points cameras - presenting the scenic values of the area and transmitting live video.

Other recommendations for the creation and operation of a site integrating the Valley of Palaces and Gardens Route:

1) continuous, ongoing updating of the content on the route's website, thanks to the uploading of information from each local entity (not necessarily business) operating in the tourism and tourism-related industries;

2) adaptation of the website to mobile devices (smartphones, tablets);

3) preparing language versions of the site other than Polish, first in English, then in German and Czech;

4) inclusion of links to websites and/or social media accounts of local service providers and producers, as well as public and social sector entities relevant to the cultural tourist;

The second stage of information integration of the Valley of Palaces and Gardens route involves the development and annual publication of an updated version of a guidebook dedicated to it. This publication should contain the most important information about the history of the route itself and the cultural attractions located along it, as well as information about the facilities and services provided in the tourist area, relevant for visiting tourists. An important part of the study would be a map showing the location of the above-mentioned objects.

Ideally, an electronic version of the guide would be published annually (a PDF file, available through a virtual platform dedicated to the route), as well as a free printed version. In the case that it would be impossible to create a free version, it is recommended that the guide book be prepared only in a printed version - for a fee. It should be available for sale both in bookstores and tourist information points in the Jelenia Góra subregion, as well as in other Polish cities, and through the route's virtual platform (or other online bookstores). Purchasing the guidebook in hard copy should also be possible at key cultural sites, tourist attractions and tourist infrastructure facilities located on and near the route.

The ruins of Bolczów Castle

The park around the Bukowiec Palace

Project Identity

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8

Cultural tourism in Ljubljana

Guidelines for improvements of cultural tourism management in the city

Authors: David Klepej, Manca Krošelj, Nina Stubičar, Naja Marot (University of Ljubljana)

Introduction

Ljubljana has experienced a tourism boom in the last decade. The growth rate of tourist arrivals in the Slovenian capital has been among the highest in Europe (even reaching over 20% annual growth of arrivals in 2018/2017) and the number of tourist overnight stays has more than doubled between the years 2014 and 2018. Several factors have contributed to this, but one of the most influential is the destination's intensive promotion abroad. Foreign tourists account for an extremely high share of tourists, on average accounting for more than 90% of all overnight stays, the highest among Slovenian municipalities. Ljubljana, by far the most developed urban destination, on average, generates around 15% of all overnight stays in Slovenia (SURS). However, the rapid development of the destination also brings along challenges to ensure that tourism benefits the city as much as possible and that its negative impacts are kept to a minimum.

If on one hand we see active promotion of Ljubljana as an urban tourist destination, on the other hand, the city has not been as active in drawing up measures and guidelines for managing the development of this activity in the city. This is also reflected in the growth of dissatisfaction of the local population with the presence of tourists and the touristification of the city centre (Ninamedia, 2019), mostly connected to the change of the service offer and the growth of renting out apartments on short-term rental portals (e.g. Airbnb).

Ljubljana has thus become one of the more popular and well-known urban destinations, where tourism strongly co-shapes the development of the urban space. Urban tourism encompasses all forms of tourism in cities, both in terms of the reason for the trip (business, leisure, visiting friends and family), the motives for the visit (purposeful visit to a destination, secondary destination on the way, random stopover) or the areas of interest (culture, architecture, sport, entertainment, shopping, etc.). In Ljubljana, cultural tourism is at the heart of destination development, as it can benefit a wider range of providers in the city, and such tourists are also associated with higher levels of education and higher spending during their visit. To fortify the promotion, the city also applied for the title of European Capital of Culture for 2025 but was unsuccessful at this attempt. However, regarding the UNESCO branding, the city has been a UNESCO Creative City of Literature since 2015 and has two inscriptions on the UNESCO World Heritage List (Prehistoric pile dwellings around the Alps since 2011 and the works of Jože Plečnik in Ljubljana – Human Centred Urban Design since 2021).

When it comes to traditional cultural tourism (visits to museums, galleries and cultural heritage sites), Ljubljana is characterised by the fact that, compared to other developed city destinations, a large proportion of cultural providers and stakeholders are public, thus operate directly under the municipality or the state supervision. The largest cultural institution is the Museums and Galleries of Ljubljana, a public institution that brings together 11 museums, galleries and cultural spaces. There are also a large number of state museums in the city, which operate directly under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture, e.g. Modern Gallery, Museum of Architecture and Design, Slovenian Ethnographic Museum, or other ministries like Slovenian School Museum. The state and the municipality also play an important role in other areas of cultural tourism, such as managing venues (Cankarjev dom, Križanke, Kino Šiška, Drama, SNG Opera and Ballet, MGL), organising events and festivals (Ljubljana Festival, Liffe). This offer is complemented by a few (smaller) stakeholders and tourism suppliers, such as private galleries, museums and venues (Cvetličarna, Equrna, Hest, MAK), as well as NGOs and other organisations active in the field of culture (Metelkova mesto, ŠKUC, Imago Sloveniae, Španski borci).
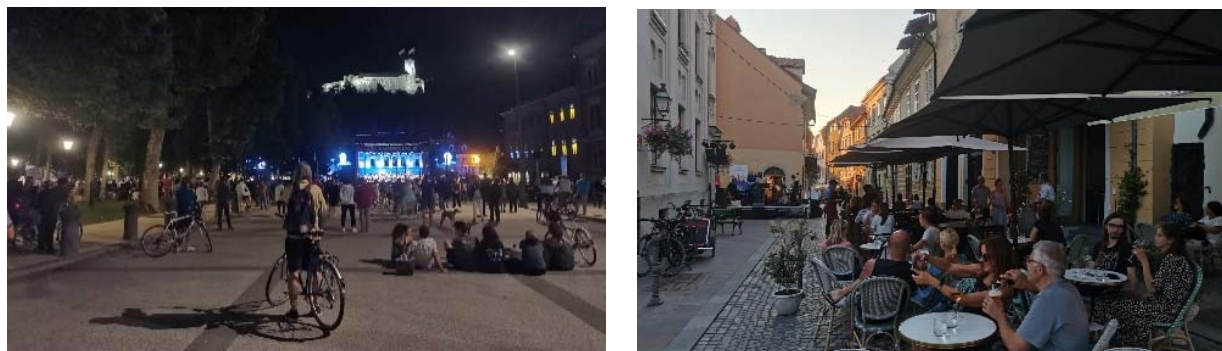

Figure 1: Ljubljana's cultural pulse in 2021. (Author: David Klepej)

1.   Evidence and Analysis

The SPOT project addressed the analysis of the development and management challenges of cultural tourism by conducting an institutional analysis, a survey with tourists, residents and various (cultural) tourism providers, and in-depth interviews with nine cultural tourism stakeholders.

Out of the 100 tourists interviewed, the majority (51 and 48% respectively) cited architecture or townscape and local traditions as the key motivation for visiting the destination (Figure 2). A high proportion of tourists is also interested in nature, history and gastronomy. Festivals, museums, film and theatre were motivators for less than a fifth of tourists.
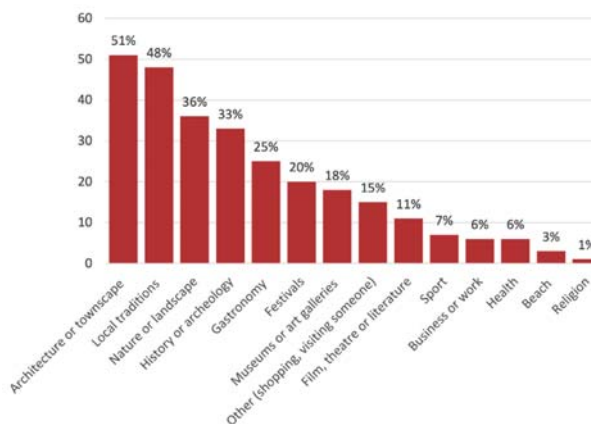

Figure 2: Tourists' key motives for visiting Ljubljana.

Cultural tourism providers consider there is a lack of cooperation between stakeholders in Ljubljana. According to the results of the survey of 40 companies we conducted in autumn 2021, the greatest amount of cooperation is currently in the design of cultural itineraries and routes and the joint implementation of promotional activities (Figure 3). The least cooperation is in the area of managing tourist flows and joint or group purchases or orders. More than one-fifth of the companies do not carry out any activities in cooperation with others, which shows the great potential and need for improving cooperation between providers in the destination. However, 30% of the companies pointed out that cultural heritage is the most important part of their cultural tourism offer and 67% strongly agreed with the statement that Ljubljana has great potential for cultural tourism development. On the other hand, only 11% strongly agreed and 33% agreed with the statement that cultural tourism in Ljubljana is well-developed.
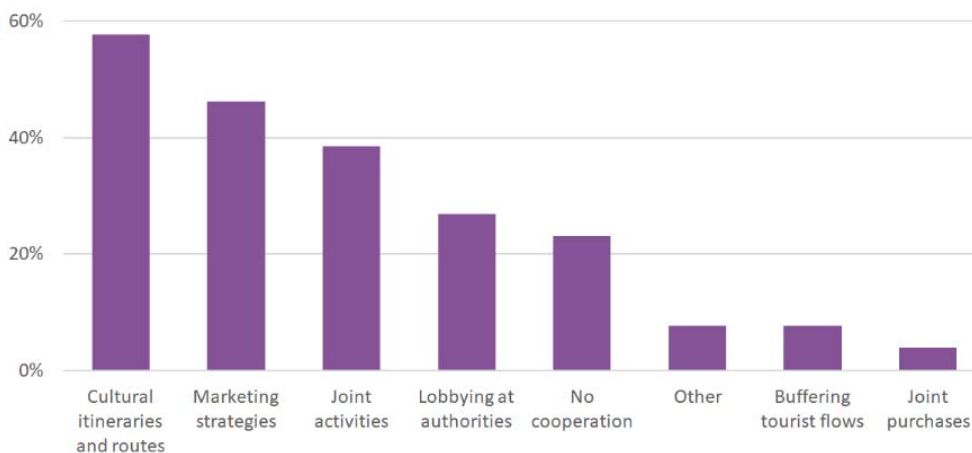

Figure 3: Areas of co-operation between companies.

> *"Ljubljana is working hard on its presentation and brand. It leaves little room for the local cultural scene to thrive in this tourist image. In return, they lack audiences and non-institutional production spaces. The pandemic has shown this"*
> *- Local Tourist Guide*
>
> *"At the local level, everything is centralised - the Municipality of Ljubljana and Ljubljana Tourism - are financed by the same institution, which consequently leads to a representation of Ljubljana with a very one-sided brand identity and a capitalist idea of tourism as only a profitable activity. In the long term, this cannot be sustainable for the local population"*
> *- Local Tourist Guide*
>
> *"The strategic approach to managing cultural tourism and developing more sustainable tourism is well managed. The Slovenian Tourist Board and Tourism Ljubljana are doing a really good job. They are good at guiding the development of cultural tourism and bringing together different tourism providers and businesses. More support could also be given to local initiatives in the cultural and creative industries."*   *- Representative of the Centre for Creativity*

According to the interviews conducted with cultural tourism stakeholders on the topic of cultural tourism management in Ljubljana, there is still a long way to go towards better intersectoral cooperation and communication (Figure 4). Some interviewees felt that there is a growing need for policies that more directly support local communities and their efforts to succeed in the tourism sector. In particular, the growing sector of micro and small enterprises and local cultural and creative industries, which often operate at the crossroads of different economic sectors. They believe that too much policy attention is focused on promoting exclusive boutique tourism, which indirectly excludes other segments of tourism and the local community, and focuses on over-promoting offers only in the centre of Ljubljana. Furthermore, they consider that the private sector is often ignored or excluded from major project collaborations compared to public sector providers. The existing partnership network of cultural and tourism providers in Ljubljana, led by Tourism Ljubljana, should be expanded. Some also believe that there is a need for more flexible policies, ones that would better empower the autonomous development of innovative cultural tourism offerings in the city.
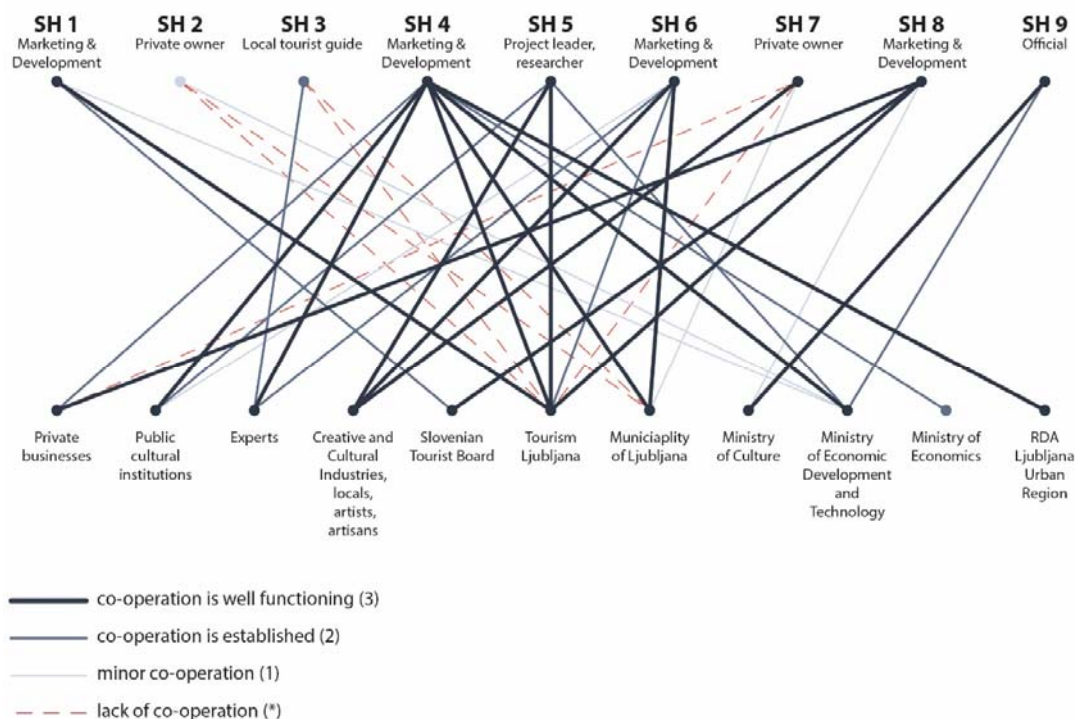

Figure 4: Interviewees have evaluated current cooperation between public sector stakeholders works well, while individual private sector stakeholders are often ignored and left out of larger project collaborations.

Based on the results of the previous analyses and knowledge of the destination, the management of cultural tourism in destination Ljubljana was analysed using an assessment wheel addressing 18 indicators in 6 areas of cultural tourism management. We assess that the destination's management performance is relatively good and that its managing bodies are at least partially addressing all of the performance indicators, but we also assess the potential for improvement in all areas. Most notably in the areas of sustainable management (which is at least active in the area of promotion) and the engagement and benefits to the local people and environment. The lack of the latter is also evident in the survey we carried out among residents. For example, the common vision of the destination development is clearly led by Tourism Ljubljana (with the support of the MOL and public institutions), but it does not reflect the needs and opinions of all stakeholders, nor does it go beyond the conventional strategic planning. Despite the many qualitative objectives of the city's tourism strategy, the key indicators of development monitoring are still qualitative and pursue the objectives of increasing the volume of tourism. The lack of cooperation is also evident in the formulation of policies at different levels, especially this is evident for the relationship between the local and the national level. The best-managed areas are sanitation infrastructure and the provision of services that also benefit the local economy and communities.
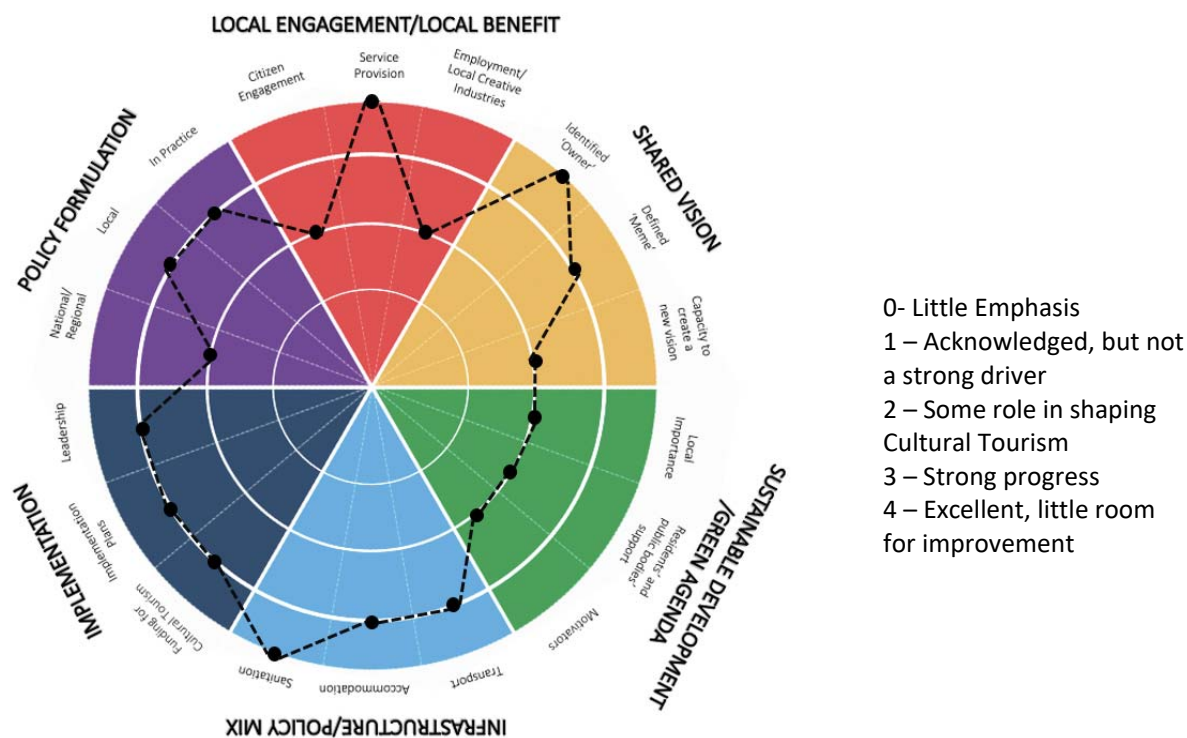

0- Little Emphasis
1 – Acknowledged, but not a strong driver
2 – Some role in shaping Cultural Tourism
3 – Strong progress
4 – Excellent, little room for improvement

Figure 5: Assessment of the current management of cultural tourism in Ljubljana.

2.   Policy Implications and Recommendations

Cultural tourism is an important economic sector at the intersection of tourism and culture in the **local environment**, but it can also help to build **European identities**, helping to overcome cultural misunderstandings and differences between European nations. If the development of cultural tourism in a destination is inclusive of the **local population**, it can also encourage them to become more active citizens, participate in the development and management of the city and take part in various cultural activities. In the case of Ljubljana, we believe that the further development of cultural tourism is certainly welcome, but managers and stakeholders need to ensure that its development is carried out in cooperation and coexistence with the local population.

In addition to the involvement of the local community, it is necessary to ensure the creation of **responsible and sustainable development objectives** that steer the development of cultural tourism away from the over-commercialisation of culture and urban space, and build the resilience of the destination and cultural tourism providers to (un)predictable events, such as was the Covid-19 pandemic. The offer should appeal more to visitors from the city, the region and the country, as domestic visitors are less vulnerable to crises than foreign visitors. We identify a key challenge in the field of cultural tourism as the high concentration of providers is directly managed by the municipality or state authorities and therefore, we propose a financial and **support framework** for the establishment of larger and more diverse offer, possibly by including NGOs and private initiatives. Support should be given not only to new products but also to new and alternative forms of cultural tourism rooted in the local environment and culture (e.g. storytelling, urban exploration, gastronomic tourism). Furthermore, there is a serious lack of **cooperation between the stakeholders**, which could lead to a number of optimisations and synergy effects. In all areas, the monitoring of the development of activities and the implementation of policies could also be improved to pursue qualitative rather than quantitative development objectives towards sustainable and responsible destination development, a good visitor experience and an increase in the quality of life in the city.

5 key directions for the development of cultural tourism in Ljubljana:
- embeddedness in the local environment and openness to the European cultural space
- involvement of the local community in the design and development of culture and tourism offer
- responsible and sustainable development objectives that will lead to a higher quality of life in the city
- a supportive environment for the development of small, new and innovative providers
- networking and cooperation between stakeholders and providers

Project Identity

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CULTURAL TOURISM

Cultural tourism in urban areas

Guidelines for improvements of cultural tourism management in cities

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Introduction

In the last several decades and especially after the economic crisis of 2008, cities have turned towards the development of tourism as a tool for economic recovery. Though tourism is currently in different phases of development in each area, starting from beginning phase to reinvention process, it has become ubiquitous in most European cities. Thus, this policy brief examines the state of tourism and its developmental drives and issues in four cities that are part of the SPOT Project's case study areas: Barcelona, Spain; Ljubljana, Slovenia; Narva, Estonia; and Nitra, Slovakia. These cities are extremely different in terms of context, culture, tourism scale and development, though it is precisely these differences that allow for various new insights into the current state of urban cultural tourism in Europe and the prevailing trends that guide its development.

Traditional modes of urban tourism based on cultural heritage tourism are quickly evolving and new types of tourism are arising to address the changing motives of today's tourists. As visitors isncreasingly value the urban experience and authenticity, a trend in place-based tourism products is emerging. In the pages to come, we provide a brief overview of how this and other changes are reflected in both destination management plans and tourists' perceptions in the four case study cities.

1. Cultural tourism in selected case study cities

As the cases presented here are very different, we first offer a comparative picture to better understand urban features and characteristics of four cities as (cultural) tourism destinations (Figure 1). Although Ljubljana is the largest in size by **geographic area**, Barcelona is by far the most populous city, with over 1.6 million **residents**. Ljubljana follows with approximately 300,000, while Nitra has 75,000 and Narva has under 60,000 residents. Ljubljana is the only country capital, while Barcelona is the capital city of the autonomous community of Catalonia in Spain. Narva and Nitra are both the largest cities in their regions, Ida-Virumaa and Nitra.

There are large differences in the **scope of tourism**, as Barcelona recorded almost 14 million tourist arrivals in 2019, followed by Ljubljana receiving just over 1.1 million (and represents the largest Slovenian urban destination), while Narva and Nitra each received under 100,000 tourist arrivals. The numbers of beds available for touristic use resemble a similar ratio between the cities.

The top **origin markets** of these four cities in 2019 also clearly show that Narva and Nitra are destinations for mostly domestic and regional tourism. On the other hand, Barcelona and Ljubljana tend to attract large shares of international tourists, including high shares of tourists from large global markets (the USA and Asian countries). This general pattern is also reflected in SPOT surveys carried out with tourists during the pandemic (2020), where domestic tourists reached shares of 91% in Ida-Virumaa (share of domestic tourists in Narva was roughly two thirds in usual years) and 87% in Nitra. COVID-19 travel restrictions influenced Ljubljana's share of domestic tourists, rising from about 5% to 26%. Only 9% were reported in Barcelona, though the survey was conducted in 2021 and thus reflects a return to pre-pandemic tourism trends.

Barcelona

1,636,762 residents
101.9 km^2
Capital of autonomous
community

13,953,209 arrivals
12.13 bednights per capita
149,467 beds
Top origin markets:
ES, US, UK, FR, DE

Ljubljana

292,966 residents
275 km^2
National capital

1,127,904 arrivals
7.57 bednights per capita
25,905 beds
Top origin markets:
IT, DE, UK, US, Asia

Narva

57,842 residents.
85 km^2
Largest town in the region

36,670 arrivals
1.89 bednights per capita
1,991 beds
Top origin markets:
EE, RU, FI, LV, LT

Nitra

76,533 residents
100 km^2
Regional centre

74,594 arrivals
2.34 bednights per capita
3,712 beds (in region)
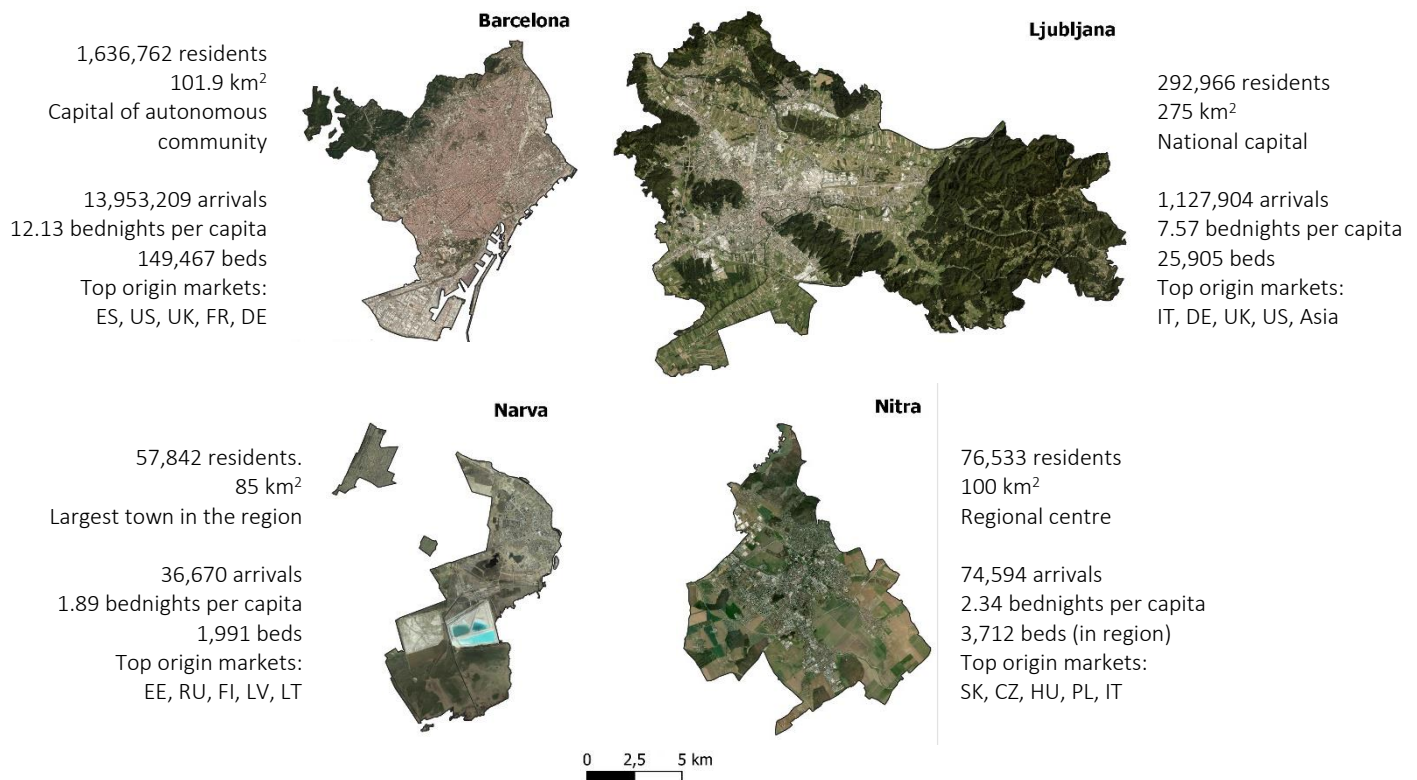Top origin markets:
SK, CZ, HU, PL, IT

0   2,5   5 km

Figure 1: Orthophoto comparison of case study cities and their position in Europe (Author: Henrich Grežo) with basic characteristics of the urban case study destinations (data for 2019).

As part of the SPOT project, we have carried out **surveys with residents, business and tourists** in all case study areas. Focusing on our urban case studies, we can observe some major similarities and differences among them. For instance, besides the prevalence of domestic tourism, Nitra and Narva also share high numbers of **day trips**: 55% of surveyed tourists in Nitra and 39% in Narva. This share was 29% in Ljubljana and only 4% in Barcelona. In most cases, tourists did not combine their visit with **trips to destinations in other countries**, (perhaps due to travel restrictions throughout 2020 and 2021). The highest share of these were found in Ljubljana, where a third of tourists also visited destinations in other countries. Only a fifth of tourists in Barcelona and a tenth of tourists in Nitra and Narva did the same.

High percentages of **returning visitors** were reported in Nitra and Narva (95% and 89%, respectively), while Ljubljana and Barcelona saw higher numbers of first-time visitors (35% and 41% returning, respectively). Interestingly, in Barcelona and Narva, a majority of returning visitors reported no difference in their experience during the pandemic compared to previous visits, though significant numbers also believed the experience was better in 2020-2021 than during their last visit. Most of Ljubljana's returning visitors also reported no change in their experience, though the second most-common answer was that the experience was better before. The highest proportion of Nitra's visitors said they "cannot say" if/how the experience was different, followed by "no difference" and "better before".

The main **motives or attractions of interest** were quite similar among the four cities. Tourists were most interested in historical sites, cultural heritage sites, townscapes, museum, and gastronomy. On the other hand, the least motivating factors for them to come to these specific destinations were health, sports, business/work, and (with the exception of Barcelona) the beach. Some of the main tourist attractions are listed in the table below. It is clear that architecture and historic buildings are among the most visited (cultural) tourist attractions in these case study cities, and that these are most often complemented with visits to museums, cathedrals and public spaces.

Table 1: Main tourist attractions in case study cities according to their type

Main attractions	Barcelona	Ljubljana	Narva	Nitra
Landmark	Sagrada Familia Basilica	Ljubljana castle	Narva castle and museum	Nitra castle and museum
Museum	Picasso Museum, FC Barcelona Museum,	National Museum of Slovenia	Narva museum	Agricultural Museum
Open space	Plaça Catalunya, Las Ramblas, Passeig de Gràcia, Park Güell	Prešernov square, Čopova street, Tivoli Park	Peetri square, Tallinn Road, River promenade	Svätopluk square, Štefánikova trieda, City park in Sihoť
Building	Casa Batlló, La Pedrera	Plečnik's architecture	Bastion	St. Emmeram's Cathedral
Religious	Barcelona Cathedral	Cathedral of St. Nicholas	Alexander's Cathedral, The Resurrection of Christ Cathedral	Church of St. Michael
Amusement	Barcelona Aquarium	House of Illusions	Astri Centre	
Sport	FC Barcelona Stadium	Stožice Sports Park, Hala Tivoli	Joaorg Beach House	HK Nitra
Congress venue	Fira Barcelona	Gospodarsko razstvišče	Narva College	Agroinštitút Nitra
Alternative culture	Fàbriques de Creació	Metelkova	Art residency	Hidepark
Most popular tours	Walking tours, City centre, Gaudí, Gothic Quarter, Boat tours, Montserrat hills	Walking tours, City centre, Plečnik, Boat tour, Feminist tour, Post-communist tour	Kreenholm tours by Narva Museum	City centre, Zobor Monastery and Zobor Hills, Calvary peak
Other	El Born Cultural Centre	Emona - Roman city	Manufacturing complex	Synagogue

Tourists in all destinations have diversified their **sources of information**, as they often rely on a combination of online, print, and word-to-mouth suggestions. Most often they rely on online search engines (38% in Ljubljana and roughly 30% in all other destinations) and social media (10-20%), which represents a shift from using traditional guidebooks, tourism agencies, fairs, and information centres. Recommendations from other people are most used by visitors to Barcelona (27%), Narva (25%) and Ljubljana (19%), but not in case of Nitra (only 2%). Most tourists seem to be pleased with the offer of case study cities and are **very likely to recommend** visiting the destinations (roughly three quarters in the cases of Barcelona and Narva, and half of visitors in Ljubljana). Only a third of visitors in Nitra are very likely to recommend the city as a tourist destination, although another third would likely recommend it.

Figure 2: Touristic pulse in Barcelona, Ljubljana, Narva, and Nitra (Authors: Danielle Bishop, David Klepej, Saara Mildeberg, Henrich Grežo).

We identified the following main similarities and differences among our case study cities:

Similarities

- *State and local level will to develop cultural tourism*
- *Interplay between different levels of government*
- *Economic transformation to a post-industrial economy*
- *Tourism seen as a driver/push factor in this change*
- *Improvements to infrastructure and hospitality*
- *Improvements represent opportunities but also come with possible negative or harmful effects*
- *Possible negative aspects of cultural (over)tourism*
- *Theoretical vs. practical implementation of sustainability*
- *Gap between planning and execution of tourism policies*
- *Digitalization and other global trends*
- *Connection vs. disconnection with the local cultural scene*
- *Impact on the housing market (varies among cities)*
- *Seasonality (cultural tourism softening the tourism peak)*
- *Uncertainty about long-term impacts of COVID-19*

Differences

- *Scope of tourism (and cultural tourism) in each city*
- *Maturity of destination*
- *Degree of stakeholder involvement*
- *Complexities of cultural tourism ecosystem: public and private actors, their relative weight, relationships, etc.*
- *Different policies and different governmental commitments regarding cultural tourism*
- *Domestic vs. international tourism proportions*
- *Tourism as source of growth and income is not always recognized in the four cities*
- *Recognition of cultural heritage and assets*
- *Lack vs. abundance of cultural tourism events*
- *Public leadership of cultural tourism*
- *Strategic plans on tourism leading up to (and after) the COVID-19 pandemic*

2. Cultural tourism challenges in urban areas

a) Transformation of cultural tourism

As stated before, the cultural tourism offer in these cities is no longer dependent solely on sites and activities of cultural heritage. Instead, many **new forms of offer** are available connected to new types of (urban) tourism, such as dark tourism, culinary tourism, alternative, post-communist and environmentally friendly tours. How much this offer is present in the cities depends not only on the urban prerequisites and history, but also the maturity of the city and its tourism market size. As an example of such differentiation in the offer, tourists can attend a "night-bazaar and lamprey festival" in Narva, "Moustache tour" in Ljubljana or learn how to make traditional *espadrille* shoes in Barcelona. Tourists are now looking for authentic urban experiences, which are not always easy to provide.

Table 2: Examples of place-based tourism offer in European urban destinations (Source: Krošelj and Marot, 2022)

Urban destination	Examples of place-based tourism offer
Amsterdam	*Van Gogh museum, river channels, tulips, red district, Rijksmuseum*
Venice	*Unique architecture, water-based experiences*
London	*Unique imperialistic capital, brutalist architecture, pop culture*
Paris	*Architecture, European capital of high fashion, "Belle Epoque", city of lovers, gastronomy*
Vienna	*Unique history, architecture and culture, gastronomy, baroque and "Jugendstil", pop-culture offer: Inspector Rex*
Barcelona	*Catalan modern architecture, Gaudi, Casa Batlló, Sagrada Familia Basilica, Dali, Picasso*
Edinburgh	*Architecture and townscapes annual Edinburgh festival, literary history, pop-culture offer: Harry Potter*
Prague	*Architecture and townscapes, pop-culture offer: movie Amadeus*

b) Cultural sustainability

Many cities have begun to adopt measures to improve the environmental sustainability of tourism, including promoting public transport, not using plastic at events, including ecological measures in their tourism agendas and strategies, and managing visitor numbers and flows to preserve environmental and heritage areas. However, the COVID-19 pandemic is a good opportunity for all cities to rethink the **comprehensive sustainability** of their tourism efforts. Rather than focusing only on the economic benefits of tourism, cities will need to rethink their strategies and improve their **social and cultural sustainability**.

This is important not just for over-touristed destinations (like Barcelona and, to some degree, Ljubljana), but also for cities like Narva and Nitra that are in the process of developing responsible, sustainable tourism strategies. SPOT residents' surveys indicated that involving local residents in the planning and implementation of local tourism agendas is crucial to improving social and cultural sustainability. This can be done in many ways: through participative processes, employing locals in tourism businesses and projects, offering discounts or free entry to cultural tourism sites for local inhabitants and many more efforts that offer a sense of belonging and keep economic benefits in the local community.

c) Complex networks of stakeholders

Tourism and culture already both separately function on a basis of a complex network of stakeholders, which become even more intricate when approached simultaneously. We can already see different needs from various **private actors**, such as suppliers of accommodation, catering and other services, tourist guides, galleries, cultural institutions, artists and other individual in culture, which are on the other side approached from different views of **public institutions and bodies** (ministries, municipalities, tourism boards, public cultural institutions) and eventually **NGOs**. We must also include the **local residents**. The network complexity and influence of (individual or a group of) actors are specific for each destination and can change in time. We could argue that the governance of tourism only needs to be applied after the destination reaches a certain development phase, yet the attemps to coordinate activities and search for potentials and synergies according to our findings seem crucial already in the early stages of destination development.

d) Complex governance framework of cultural tourism

The complexity of tourism governance is a major challenge for the future of cultural tourism in these case study cities. First, responsibility for creating and implementing tourism policy is shared between the local, regional and national levels to varying degrees in each city. This overlap can create confusion and slow down processes of implementation and change. Second, the separation of governmental actors (and, consequently, their policies) in tourism and culture means that each area works "in its own silo" and has its own views and ideas on cultural tourism. Finally, many tourism activities and programs depend on the influence of policies and support of financial programmes from both the EU and national, regional, and local governments, which may shift or disappear according to yearly budgets or changes in political power. Furthermore, as the assessment wheels (Figure 3) highlight, each city has its own unique strengths in current governance framework and points of future improvement in tourism management.

While **Barcelona** has a strong tourism infrastructure and has become an international example for the development and implementation of tourism policy, the effects of over-tourism have caused significant strain on citizens' quality of life and engagement, which points toward the need for improving the cultural sustainability of tourism in the city.

Ljubljana has laid ground for its tourism growth in a number of strategic policy documents and precise marketing activities, both guided by the local tourism organisation Ljubljana Tourism. All aspects of the assessment wheel have been addressed to a certain extent, yet there is still room for improvements. For example, there are many policy goals focusing on sustainable and responsible growth of tourism in the city, but the main indicators for implementation of strategy are still focused on the growth of tourist visits, overnight stays and visitors' spending.

Ida-Virumaa has created a strong regional tourism image with a guiding "Adventure land" concept, however, there are still many steps to take to get locals and investors from outside this cluster on board and to further develop the tourism infrastructure and sector. Here, local policy documents are often perceived to be unrealistic and therefore of not much use. The transformation of **Narva** into a post-industrial economy has also been shadowed by the unclarities associated with the green turn, and fears about a strong imbalance between ecological, economic, social and cultural sustainability aspects. Strong leaders that have made a strong appearance in the past years are the silver lining to this otherwise pessimistic assessment wheel.

In **Nitra**, the guidelines for (cultural) tourism and creative industry development are well layed down in the Strategy for the development of sustainable tourism, and through certified brand. Cultural tourism in Nitra strongly relates to the history and dissemination of the Cyril and Methodius heritage not only locally, regionally, or nationally, but from 2021 also at the European level through the Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. Nitra wants to be on the map of Europe as a cultural city bearing traces of an important common European history. The challenge is assuring more significant involvement of creative industries and the local population to increase employment in the field of tourism.
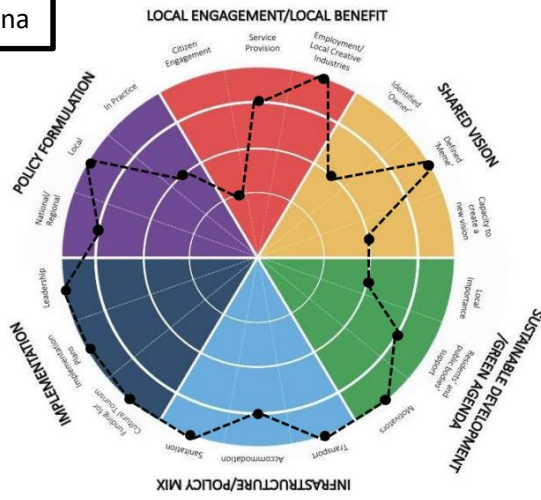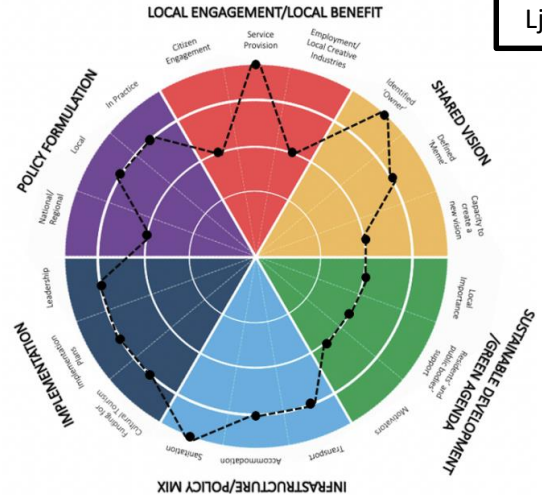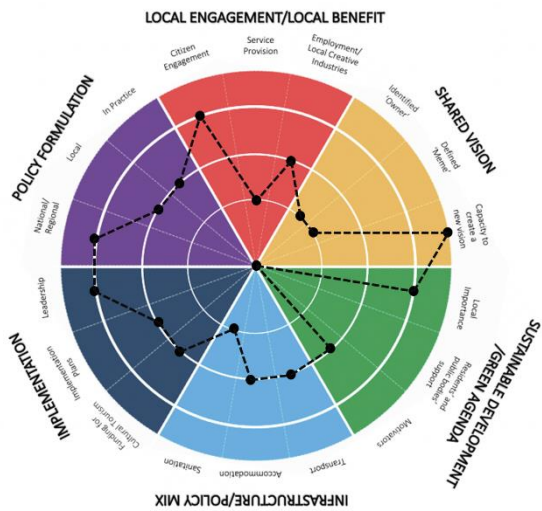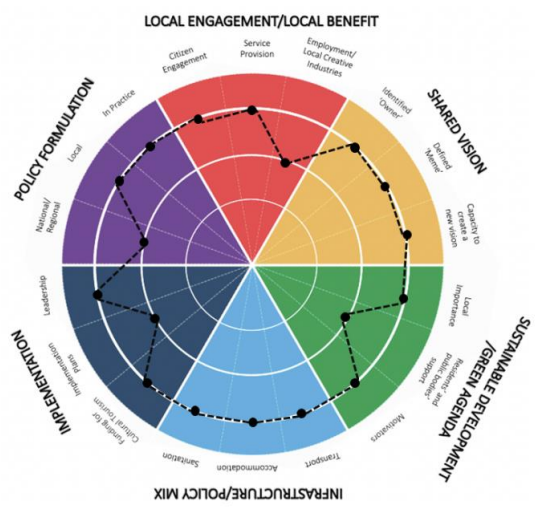
Figure 3: Assessment of the current management of cultural tourism in case study cities.
Scale: 0 (centre) - Little Emphasis; 1 – Acknowledged; 2 – Some role; 3 – Strong progress; 4 (outer circle) – Excellent.

e) Digitalisation

As part of an effort to make cities more attractive in a more modern way as well as a tool to store data on history landmarks for possible future renovations, several localities have begun **to revive and enhance the offer** through information technology. This was even more brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and connected to travel and social distancing restrictions. On the one hand, more **locations can be visited virtually** using web browsers, apps to assist tourist experience and exploration, and information about tourist locations and activities are also increasing. On the other hand, **new forms of presentation** of well-known spaces are emerging, e.g., augmented reality and activating audio guides using spatial sensors. Such places exist in all case study cities. Narva is currently planning to create a VR-based attraction, Virtual Old Narva, which would allow people to see the pre-war town. However, new challenges are also emerging, e.g. how to include the digitally excluded part of the population in these activities, and how often are these new forms really used by locals and tourists.

Good practice in digitalisation: Casa Batlló, Barcelona

This Art Nouveau villa carried out extensive renovations during the pandemic, fully embracing digital technologies. In addition to reconfiguring the main floor and adding a new floating staircase to help reduce visitor congestion and improve the implementation of COVID-19 health measures, the house also opened more than 2,000 m2 of new spaces to the public. This includes two immersive installations fusing art and technology that help visitors delve inside the mind of architect Antoni Gaudí. The tour also features smart audioguides that turn on automatically as you enter the house's varied rooms, a soundtrack composed specifically for the house, hologram projections that show workers carrying out their daily tasks or bring historical documents to life, and other.

f) COVID-19 and cultural tourism

Prior to COVID-19, these four case study destinations had lacked strategies for tackling crisis situations, a fact which is evident in the huge **losses in tourist arrivals** suffered by each city in 2020. Barcelona saw only 2.1 million visitors (-78% from 2019) and 3.9 million overnight stays (-80%), while Ljubljana saw similar drops of 77% in visitors (to 255,964) and 76% in overnight stays (to 540,195). Narva recorded only 20,114 visitors (-45% from 2019) and 31,617 overnight stays (-43%), and Nitra recorded 30,221 overnight stays in 2020 (-60%). Immediate responses tended toward **campaigns to attract domestic or "proximity" tourists** (from the same city, region, country or neighbouring countries), such as the "Ask a friend over" campaign in the Ida-Viru Tourism Cluster, the "Catalonia is your home" campaign in Barcelona or "Abroad or Ljubljana?" campaign in Ljubljana. Despite the quick adaptations made by the tourism industry and its actors during the pandemic, all four destinations currently do not have any medium- or long-term strategic plans or tourism policies in place for the post-pandemic future of tourism. Given that urban destinations have suffered the most during the pandemic, good planning in the medium- and long-term will be crucial for rebuilding tourism efforts in cities. On the other side, however, in 2022 we already saw that in some cities tourism visits and overnight stays already reached the pre-pandemic numbers.

3. Policy Implications and Recommendations

Cultural tourism is an important economic sector at the intersection of tourism and culture in the local environment, but it can also help to strengthen European identities, and facilitate better cultural understanding between the residents of Europe. If the development of cultural tourism in a destination is inclusive of the local population, it can work toward correcting previous negative consequences of tourism that some cities face (such as Barcelona and Ljubljana), including noise, littering, overcrowding in public spaces, rising rents and the loss of economic benefits to outside actors. Including the local population in the development of cultural tourism agendas can also encourage them to become more active citizens, participate in the development and management of the city and take part in various cultural activities. In all our case study cities, we believe that the further development of cultural tourism is welcome, but managers and stakeholders must ensure that its development is carried out in cooperation and coexistence with the local population.

In addition to the involvement of the local community, it is necessary to ensure the creation of responsible and sustainable development objectives that steer the development of cultural tourism away from the over-commercialisation of culture and urban space and that build the resilience of the destination and cultural tourism providers to (un)predictable events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The offer should appeal to "proximity" visitors from the city, the region, and the country, rather than only to international visitors, as domestic visitors are less vulnerable to crises than foreign visitors.

A key challenge in the field of cultural tourism is the high concentration of providers directly managed by the municipal or state authorities. We therefore propose a financial and support framework for the creation of the largest and most diverse offer possible on the part of the many, varied stakeholders present in our cities, including the voices of NGOs and private initiatives. Support should be given not only to new products but also to new and alternative forms of cultural tourism that are rooted in the local environment and culture (e.g., storytelling, urban exploration, gastronomic tourism).

At the same time, much greater collaboration is needed between actors from the tourism sector and the cultural sector, especially given the large role that culture plays in tourism as a whole (and the cultural tourism field in particular). Currently, the governmental actors responsible for these sectors are housed in different areas of government (generally, tourism bodies are under the jurisdiction of business and the economy, while cultural bodies are under the jurisdiction of culture, education, and community), with little interaction between the two. A more coordinated effort to plan tourism strategies and agendas could result in a more sustainable and respectful type of cultural tourism on offer in our case study cities.

Finally, in all areas, the monitoring of the development of activities and the implementation of policies could also be improved to pursue qualitative rather than quantitative development objectives towards sustainable and responsible destination development, a good visitor experience and an increase in the quality of life in the city. This means that destinations must begin to privilege the holistic sustainability of cultural tourism - i.e., social, cultural, environmental, and economic sustainability.

Six key directions for the development of cultural tourism in European cities:

- Embeddedness in the local environment and openness to the European cultural space

- Involvement of the local community in the design and development of culture and tourism offer

- Responsible and sustainable development objectives that will lead to a higher quality of life in the city

- Greater coordination and collaboration between governmental actors in the tourism and cultural sectors

- A supportive environment for the development of small, new and innovative providers

- Networking and cooperation between stakeholders and providers

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4. Related reports and further readings

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.3390/soc12050127

Project Identity

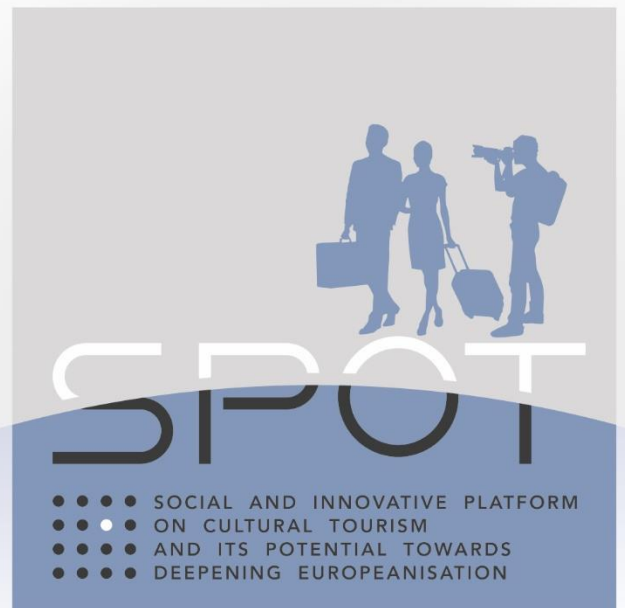|	
Project name	Social and innovative Platform on Cultural Tourism and its potential towards deepening Europeanisation (SPOT)
Coordinator	Prof. Milada Šťastná, Ph.D. Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic milada.stastna@mendelu.cz
Consortium	Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development, Dresden, Germany CERS Institute for Regional Studies, Győr, Hungary Wageningen University & Research, Wageningen, Netherlands Tallinn University, Estonia Karl Franzens University of Graz, Austria University of Aberdeen, United Kingdom University of the Aegean, Mitiline, Greece University of Barcelona, Spain University of Verona, Italy University of Wrocław, Poland University of Ljubljana, Slovenia Constantine the Philosopher University, Nitra, Slovakia
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11

SLOVAKIA

PolicyBRIEF

SPOT

SOCIAL AND INNOVATIVE PLATFORM
ON CULTURAL TOURISM
AND ITS POTENTIAL TOWARDS
DEEPENING EUROPEANISATION

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Martinský Hill

For local policymakers

Author: UKF team

Introduction

Martinský Hill was originally a historical, and later a military area – currently with a huge potential for revitalization (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2).

This area was inhabited by several cultures already in prehistoric times. Today, the remains of an old Slavic fortress with an area of 20 hectares can be seen here. At the end of the 8th and 9th centuries, a massive fortress with a dense population was located here. It also included the Romanesque Church of St. Martin from the 11th century. In the second half of the 19th century, Martinský Hill was the property of the local bishopric, and it was used mainly for agricultural purposes later a military garrison settled there. Currently, the extensive area of the barracks is one of the most important military monuments in Slovakia. The Nitra Archeopark is part of the Martinský Hill area.

Since an important road in the Topoľčany – Levice direction passed in the close vicinity, a military garrison was stationed here since the 1880s. One of the five military concentration camps of Hungary was located here. The "Barracks" National Cultural Monument includes 13 monument buildings located on the premises: the command building, 2 officer pavilions, 3 residential buildings, a guardhouse, a bowling alley, an inn, the main hospital, 2 hospital pavilions and a park.

In the Great Moravian part of the Archeopark, 4 semi-buried buildings are presented, three of which are with an above-ground log structure and one is built on stilts and has the so-called woven and clay-smeared walls. Another restored object is the free-standing clay dome bread oven with a pre-oven pit.

Fig. 1: The area of the former barracks at Martinský Hill, Nitra, Slovakia.

Source: Documentation for building permit, 2016

Fig. 2: The barracks building at Martinský Hill, Nitra, Slovakia.

Source: https://www.nitra.eu/9017/siator-tabor-martinsky-vrch-kasarne

1. Evidence and Analysis

At the end of November 2020, mayor Marek Hattas informed that Nitra received 15.5 million euros from European funds for the creation of the Creative Center. This project is co-financed by the Operational Program "Integrated Regional Operational Program" and from the resources of the city of Nitra. The aim of the call was to stimulate the support of sustainable employment and the creation of jobs in the cultural and creative industry by creating a favourable environment for the development of creative talent and non-technological innovations. The money from this call can also be used for the reconstruction and modernization of buildings for the needs of creative centres.

Apart from the buildings of the former barracks, these resources will also be used to restore the Palace Cinema on Radlinského Street where a multifunctional hall for theatre, concerts and audiovisual art is envisaged.

In the area of the former barracks, altogether four buildings will be completely restored, in which conditions will be created for the functioning of a library with a reading room, a coworking space, craftsman's workshops, a computer graphics studio and other activities. The work will also include the completion of new premises, which will connect two existing buildings. Complete reconstruction is planned by the end of 2023.

A new kindergarten for 144 children has already been established in the renovated historical building, to which a new building has been annexed. Since this included a reconstruction of a historical building, the Regional Monument Office also assisted in the construction. The city invested five per cent of the total amount, i.e. 48 240, in the reconstruction, and the rest of the money was obtained by the city through the Integrated Regional Operational Program as a non-refundable financial contribution to increase the infrastructure capacities of kindergartens. In total, the new kindergarten project cost 2 612 509 euros.

2.   Policy Implications and Recommendations

The city council, which is made up of a relatively wide spectrum of political parties, approved the application for the creation of the Creative Center despite certain concerns about the sustainability of this project. The municipality will have to ensure the operation of this project for at least ten years.

Currently, part of the premises is used on a daily basis for the purposes of said kindergarten (Fig. 3) and another part is accessible for safety reasons (ongoing reconstruction of buildings, overgrown trees...) for the implementation of specific activities listed below.

Fig. 3: The new kindergarten building at Martinský Hill, Nitra, Slovakia.

Source: https://nitraden.sk/foto-materska-skola-v-historickej-budove-kasarni-je-hotova-pozrite-sa-ako-to-v-nej-vyzera/

The recommendations relate to the continuation of already implemented activities:

- 2015: The Martinský Hill area was opened to the public during the biggest city festivities Nitra, Dear Nitra on July 3 - 5. From Friday to Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., visitors could view the most interesting buildings of the former barracks, such as the command and officer buildings, the guardhouse, the inn and the bowling alley, as well as the remains of the Church of St. Martin. History lovers could take advantage of two free guided tours per day. A monument was opened at the remains of the foundations of the Church of St. Martin and the foundation stone of the Archeopark was laid. The area was enriched by an exhibition of archaeological finds from this locality, examples of period customs, archery, a camp of the Old Slavs, and philatelists presented a postage stamp made for this occasion. Also, a new promotional brochure about Martinský Hill was released.
- 2016: Opening of the area during the Nitra, Dear Nitra festival with a program in the area, guided tours, a stop on the Cyril and Methodius pilgrimage and the city tourist train.

- 2017: Opening of the area during the Nitra, Dear Nitra festival, a stop on the Cyril and Methodius pilgrimage with an accompanying program. A rich program was also provided during World Tourism Day in September, e.g. a tour of the Slavic dwellings was prepared in the Archeopark, and visitors could see a demonstration of baking in a period oven, pottery firing and try archery. Because Martinský Hill is also an important military monument, a demonstration of historical equipment, weapons and military equipment was prepared. The visitors could experience the life of soldiers in period camps, historical battles from World War II and dynamic demonstrations of training practised in the Czechoslovak army. At the same time, the depository of the Archaeological Institute of the Slovak Republic was made available. The Hidden Beauty of Martinský Hill was an exhibition of photographs by workshop participants who creatively rendered the "genius loci" of the old Nitra barracks by photographing it during the day and at night.
- 2018: Opening of the area during the Nitra, Dear Nitra festival, a stop on the Cyril and Methodius pilgrimage with an accompanying program, and also on Halloween in October. Those interested could choose from two types of tours of the area – a pedestrian tour, and a ride on the tourist train from Svätoplukovo Square.
- 2019: Opening of the area during the Nitra, Dear Nitra festival, a stop on the Cyril and Methodius pilgrimage with an accompanying program.
- 2020: Opening of the area during the Nitra, Dear Nitra festival, a stop on the Cyril and Methodius pilgrimage with an accompanying program.
- 2021 and 2022: Opening of the area during the Nitra, Dear Nitra festival, a stop on the Cyril and Methodius pilgrimage with an accompanying program. The cleaning of Martinský Hill was carried out as part of the cleaning of the Seven Hills of Nitra in August.

Other recommendations are related to the improvement of marketing of Martinský Hill as a Creative Center and an Archeopark after the completion of the necessary infrastructure and landscaping of the entire area. Only then it will be possible to use it all year round.

Project Identity

Project name	Social and innovative Platform on Cultural Tourism and its potential towards deepening Europeanisation (SPOT)
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