

**Elements for the drafting of the document NECSTouR Network, which will be
officially presented at the European Tourism Forum in
Naples 30-31 October 2014**



Cultural Tourism in Europe, let's join our forces!

The contribution of NECSTouR, Network of European Regions, aims at a stronger commitment to coordinate initiatives and concrete projects to strengthen the offer of cultural tourism in Europe.

First of all, NECSTouR, thanks the European Commission - in particular the Directorate General Enterprise - for the invitation to participate, leading to the European Tourism Forum in Naples a specific contribution and expresses the sincere satisfaction, for the attention that the European Institutions and the Italian Government are proving to the work that our network, made up of regions, universities and representatives from the world of tourism, is pursuing with conviction since 2008.

We express a special appreciation for the decision to dedicate to the topic of the synergy between tourism and culture, jobs and international comparison of this year's European Forum. It is an initiative that we share the value with respect to the issues that have been and are the basis of the identity of the network since its giving of NECSTouR.

We agree, therefore, to explore the many aspects linked to this issue, from the need to ensure competitiveness and sustainability, to many beautiful tourist destinations of our Europe, to the need to develop even further the coordination and enhancement of cultural itineraries in a modern way, also in order to create the conditions for a strong relationship between: the government, cultural institutions and economic activities, involving more and more the system of European SMEs for being able to create good jobs.

The regions, which constitute the network NECSTouR are very pressed for creating conditions and opportunities to create a joint and coordinated work, not only between regions but also with the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the European Institute of cultural Routes, UNESCO, in order to ensure the conditions for a development respectful of our environmental and cultural heritage in European tourism.

Many regions are experiencing specific operational methods to realize the principles, strategies and indicators that until now have been theorized. Regions can really affect the construction of a new tourist offer sustainable and competitive in our many tourist destinations: In those already well-established and that, for this reason, they are exposed to the risks of uncontrolled development or in those who have suffered and still many potential to express.

In this contest, we would like to remember a very significant event: during the European Day of Tourism, which was held in Brussels on 27 September 2010, NECSTouR signed a document of intent between the Council of Europe and European Commission, to enable a relationship of concrete collaboration between the world of Culture (those who work with commitment to the protection and enhancement of cultural and historic heritage and landscape in Europe) and the world of economics and tourism.

This was an important step to start, since then, a steady job for the exploitation for touristic purposes of the cultural routes recognized by the Council of Europe.

One tangible result, linked to the Agreement between NECSTouR and the Council of Europe, has been the realization of the VIII Edition of the seminar Eurometing of 2010 dedicated to cultural tourism and the presentation of 28 March 2011 in Luxembourg at the European Institute of Routes cultural, the results of a first test of the Model NECSTouR, for the identification of specific indicators of sustainability and competitiveness, applicable on large European Cultural Routes.

NECSTouR has continued to work with determination, honoring the recognition that the European Commission has given its Communication 532/2010 - dedicated to the new political framework for tourism in Europe - by locating it as a reference entity for experimentation and research aimed at identifying a model of indicators for the sustainable management of destinations in order to develop a European Brand to promote tourist destinations of excellence.

With the work on the ground that the regions are realizing, local institutions are involved, often in small towns, stimulating them to deepen ties with European roots and at the same time providing the necessary support for the involvement and support in the creation of networks local small and medium-sized. These companies are invaluable to consolidate a European tourism vital and based on the authenticity of territorial identities.

Certainly for the regions of Europe, which have a land deeply characterized and enriched by historical memory, cultural tourism is one of the main resources. However, this type of tourism, especially when it is organized, it tends to be concentrated in the most famous places that are part of the collective imagination, with the consequences that we know in terms of "consumption" of the territories and cultural heritage.

Much of the work done in recent years has, however, focused on the creation of opportunities for the development of sustainable tourism in the more marginal territories, which, though far from the major tourist centers, have considerable attractions in terms of landscape and culture. Direct tourist flows "virtuous" to these destinations means to ensure that these areas can take advantage of the positive effects for economy and employment generated by tourism, provided that it is a kind of tourism strongly characterized by the elements of sustainability.

We must be aware that tourism is a complex subject that requires a tremendous commitment of public institutions in order to create a favorable environment for SMEs, where they can best express their creativity and their innovation potential also in view of strengthening employment.

From experience that NECSTouR's regions are conducting, we have further strengthened the belief that we cannot seriously speak of "tourism product" if we do not create material and immaterial infrastructure for tourists but also for citizens and make them able to live in cities, towns, places of the many fascinating European identities, and also to make them physically accessible, and provide skilled services for all: reception, accommodation, information, support, security, etc.

It 'important to join our forces!

In the light of this awareness, we want to share, and to reiterate, even in the context of the European Tourism Forum in Naples, that NECSTouR intends to bring to the attention of the institutions and representatives of the world of tourism the need to strengthen the comparison and point:

The definition to schedule meetings and seminars for policy makers and technicians of public and private institutions, specifically dedicated to deepen in practice opportunities for the development of a competitive and sustainable cultural tourism, beginning with the twelfth edition of Euromeeting 2014 will be held in Florence on 26 and 27 November 2014 laying down a session specifically devoted to these priorities;

To a greater synergy of action, focusing on large and real opportunities that the new Structural Funds programming will offer in the 2014-2020 planning period, in particular for local, territorial and urban development, for the quality of work and training and for the enhancement of the natural and rural environment;

To a more effective joint work, aimed at involving European universities and the world of business and work, in order to develop tools for research and innovation that can enhance the synergies between development and protection of cultural heritage, material and immaterial, and tourism activities and economic change;

To pay greater attention and a more structured involvement of the younger generations of Europeans who, thanks to specific policies and incentives for the promotion of youth tourism in Europe, will have more opportunities to meet and exchange experiences in the places of culture and to meet and enriched their knowledge of many European identities.

To continue along this path with greater determination and means, NECSTouR is available to offer his contribution of ideas and relationships, knowing they can rely on the commitment and the will of the European Parliament, the Commission, the Committee of the Regions, the Committee economic and Social Council of Europe, UNESCO

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