

Tourism and Active Ageing

Demographic change and population ageing challenge many EU member countries to think about the new and innovative ways to organize services and to maintain regions' competitiveness and enhance smart growth. It is estimated that in 2030 about 24% of European citizens are over 65 years old. Even though it brings many new challenges, lately there has been emergent discussion concerning the possibilities and new innovations which it can create for many sectors.

TOURAGE project is tackling this issue from one perspective by discussing what possibilities ageing can bring for the tourism sector. Potentials are significant as tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the

Europe. Project regions are relatively remote with a lot of untapped development potential in this regard. By focusing more on the growing segment of seniors, regions can foster off-season tourism, reach more potential tourists and provide possibilities for new innovations and entrepreneurship. Essential is to develop and provide services which meet the needs of the seniors and provide easy access to those services. Likewise, tourism and ageing policies should take into account the tourism as one aspect of active and healthy ageing. TOURAGE project emphasizes that senior tourism can be seen not only as possibility for the entrepreneurship but also as a way to enhance mental and physical wellbeing and quality of life of the seniors.

TOURAGE project also wants to emphasize the empowerment and participation of the seniors. Hence, not only by exploring the good

practices and tourism supply of the regions the seniors have possibility to express their needs, interests and constrains relating to the tourism. The feedback will give input to the development of the senior tourism policy and model for the project regions.

We hope that you enjoy reading this newsletter and keep following the TOURAGE project in future too. From the project's facebook and web pages you can find more inspiring ideas and experiences from the project regions. Every Age Is Tour Age!

On behalf of the TOURAGE project partners,
Ulla Äänismaa
Lead Partner
Regional Council of North Karelia

About Tourage

The project has grown out from the idea that although Demographic Change brings many challenges it can also bring opportunities to the regions. Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the Europe and relatively remote regions have both a lot of unexploited and unknown development potential in this regard. The project seeks to identify good practices on developing tourism possibilities for growing segment of elderly travelers.

More about project You can find [here](#)

More about Good practices You can find [here](#)



Project partners

12 partners from 10 different countries



Finland
Lead partner: Regional Council of North Karelia



Spain
County Council of Granada



Poland
Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic



Poland
Podkarpackie Region



Hungary
Lake Balaton Development Coordination Agency



Hungary
Észak-Alföld Regional Development Agency



Romania
The North-West Region



Greece
Region of East Macedonia & Thrace



Latvia
Vidzeme planning region



Slovakia
Regional Development Agency of the Prešov Self-Governing Region



Ireland
West Regional Authority



Bulgaria
Bourgas Regional Tourist Association

Kick-Off event

Exploring forest, snow and silence in North Karelia

The kick-off was held in North Karelia, Finland on 19th - 22nd March 2012. During the kick-off project had also a great opportunity to disseminate the project to the wide European interest group in the conference "Perspectives on Ageing... High-level Conference on Health and Long-term Care" which took place same time in the city of Joensuu. The

event was one of the main events of the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012 in Finland and it gathered about 140 participants from 26 European countries to discuss the challenges and opportunities of the ageing. On 21st - 22nd March the first study visit was organized where project partners learned about the accessible nature tourism in Ruunaa recreational area which is one of the most extensive accessible nature tourism destinations in Finland and safe and cost-efficient transport solution, Koli shuttle taxi,

which improves the accessibility of Koli National Park. Region of North Karelia is a land of lakes and forests, thus their potential in developing wellbeing and green care services was discussed too. On the other hand Karelia a la Carte network represented the model how to create successful network of regional food, handicraft and tourism entrepreneurs and create joint tourism products. The model has been transferred to other Finnish regions too.

More information about kick-off find [here](#).



Study visit in Vidzeme

Vidzeme planning region is one of the most Latvian region in Latvia due to the fact that 85% of citizens are Latvians. With different traditions which are still strongly alive in almost every Latvian family Vidzeme region shares also with its tourists. 12th June 2012 project "Tourage" partners visited the most significant touristic sites in Vidzeme planning region, focusing on senior tourism.

More information about the Study visit in Vidzeme find [here](#).



Dissemination events

"How tourism can contribute to active ageing?" - Debrecen, Hungary

Representatives of local and regional authorities, academic institutions, tourism organisations and enterprises were present to share their ideas on senior tourism on the 8th June 2012 in Debrecen, Hungary. The event was an opportunity to introduce the TOURAGE INTERREG IVC project to the wider audience, and also to focus on the "2012 - European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations" and its contribution to tourism development.

More information find [here](#).

Dissemination activities in ERB - Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic, Poland

During the first reporting period the Association undertook activities within all component of the project with special focus on communication and dissemination and identification of potential good practices. In order to introduce the project the members of the Association, the information about the project was presented during two meetings with senior local and regional decision makers.

More information find [here](#).

Knowledge of Ageing in North Karelia

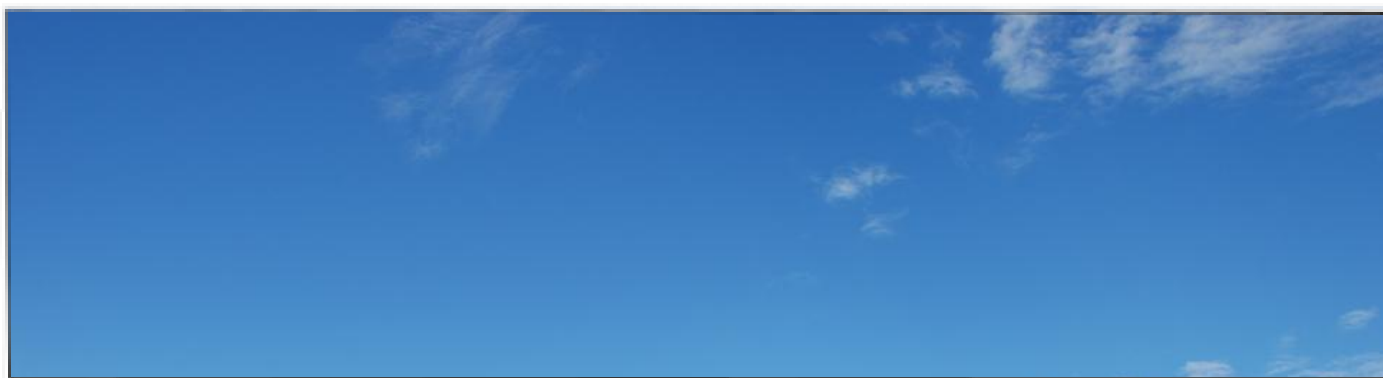
North Karelia University of Applied Sciences have created a definition for the “knowledge of ageing “ in their publication “Check Marks for the Knowledge of Ageing” based on their long expertise in that matter. According to that publication the knowledge of ageing means knowledge and skills in which the global phenomenon of ageing can be seen as an opportunity for all to learn and live a new type of a full life in all sectors and branches of the society. The knowledge of ageing is based on the idea of senior citizens playing an active role in the society.

They also influence and take part in decision-making that affects them.

Ageing is a valuable and positive phenomenon, an inviolable human right of every citizen. This right belongs to everyone regardless of their gender, nationality and financial position or ability to function- or lack of it. Ageing does not only mean receiving services. It means comprehensive participation in building our shared world.

We have to remember that in addition to professional competence, the knowledge of ageing includes the specific competence of senior citizens, individuals and groups.

Knowledge of ageing -or taking the needs of an ageing population into account - is needed in working life, planning of housing and the living environment, various sectors of education and training, cultural life, tourism and wherever people of different ages are leading their everyday lives. (source: Check Marks for the Knowledge of Ageing, North Karelia University of Applied Sciences 2011)



In North Karelia Senior Citizens are Growing Resource

The various strategies in North Karelia, Regional Plan and Welfare Programme point the direction for the region’s development over the next few decades. The ageing population is considered as a regional resource. The Regional Strategic Programme 2030 creates a vision of a viable and safe region where the residents have good basic requisites for welfare, healthy life, influencing and participating. The regional Council of North Karelia’s Welfare Programme 2015 stresses safeguarding welfare and ability to function in various stages. The health, ability to function and independent living of the aged will be promoted through new service models and solutions for ageing, putting more focus on preventive work and support at early stage to prevent social inclusion and health problems as well as supporting new product and service innovations. The senior citizen of the future is commonly considered as someone who is wealthy and active, have a good health and enjoy wellbeing. But in regard to ageing, we have to remember also those who are excluded or at risk of being excluded.

Tourism means many opportunities for seniors. Seniors of today are willing to travel a lot and he/she prioritizes health and refreshing oneself. Most of the seniors are interested in culture experiences, relaxing, wellbeing and different activities in green care environment, nature. For example, in Finland and North Karelia green care services have been emphasized as a one of the development targets also concerning senior tourism services. Green care means the utilization of nature and rural environment such as plants, animals, daily routines, communality and silence as a source of wellbeing. It is an umbrella concept for many methods which are improving mental and physical wellbeing. Senior tourism gives many possibilities to develop well-being entrepreneurship and employment in rural areas and external border regions.

*Irma Ahokas-Kukkonen
Regional planner (welfare)
Regional council of North Karelia*

NEXT EVENT: ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN GRANADA

The County Council of Granada (Spain) will host the first Annual Conference on 25th September. It

will offer the opportunity to diffuse first results of the project and to show some of the main good practices on senior tourism that partners organisation have already identified. The event will also include information about other good practices developed in Spain at a national level. The connection of the project objective with the active ageing and the fact that this year is the European Year for Active Ageing will also make this issue present during the Annual Conference of Granada. We will also pay attention to the importance of potential of senior tourism as an engine for further

economic development and employment generation, especially in rural areas.

All key stakeholders of tourism for seniors are invited to attend the event: institutions, companies, associations... More information will be soon diffused about the content of the Conference and the way for registration.



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