

## **EUSAIR Stakeholder Conference**

### **Conclusions**

Dear ladies and gentleman, dear speakers here we are at the end of the EUSAIR Stakeholder Conference and it is time to sum up all our opinions, to conclude on our priorities, to check what are the main mechanisms to reach them, to find out is there a will and how?

The first aim of the ESC was to give visibility to the EUSAIR strategy, its very concrete goals and priorities.

Our first Panel was dealing with the topic of sustainable management of cultural routes in EUSAIR, EUSAIR member states' stakeholders, experts and cultural routes' managers presented best practices in storytelling and cultural tourism products on the routes!

#### **First conclusion:**

We have heard of the participative dynamics of sustainable tourism, of transformative and innovative actions of diversifying policies in product development around the core of culture and heritage of destinations. Culture gives the recognizable and desirable profile to destinations, moves people to new spaces! Finally this brought us to the conclusion that all of that cannot be achieved without the inclusion of communities and small local enterprises who necessary are the part of the process of developing sustainable tourism on cultural routes. So this is the basic structure we build upon introducing interpretation, storytelling and storydoing, or smart ways as part of the innovative thematic cultural tourism product. Cultural routes present a powerful tool to diversify the offer of EUSAIR, to redirect tourism flows, to overcome seasonality and to introduce new tourism interactive and hybrid products, combining creative and gastronomy, biking and photo tourism, slow and well being tourism etc.

**Second panel** continued with discussions on over-tourism and recovery in the light of trends and perspectives, and the implications for all sectors closely linked to tourism, in particular in terms of future projects, the EUSAIR flagships

**Second conclusion thus pointed towards EUSAIR** as a fragile area, very much endangered by climate changes, by its own attractiveness, and by dangers such as COVID pandemic. Although we are very much aware that the worst affected countries by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 were those highly dependent on coastal and sea tourism, what we have also learned is that challenges usually bring new ideas to table, they bring new unexpected solutions.

Changing values of our visitors, need for safety, security, for open authentic spaces, obviously can provoke new responsibility, as well as integrated approach to EUSAIR destinations' management.

In order to overarch the crisis, joint innovative business models were introduced through cross pillar projects, including the care for environment, both natural and cultural, cultural values and environmental structures, pointing towards green transition, digitalisation, multimodality for climate resilience, integrated responsible and smart management of spaces.

**Third panel concluded** with the topic of the revision of the EUSAIR Action Plan, encouraging innovation and sustainability in all EUSAIR pillar sectors in a post-pandemic Europe. We have heard about the Transition pathway for tourism for a more resilient, innovative and sustainable ecosystem as a stimulant for the revision of the EUSAIR Action plan.

Stakeholders pointed out that sustainability will have to be the driver for the mid-long term plans of EUSAIR destinations. Raising awareness of the efforts as regards sustainability will be essential for the destinations and competition will be hard. A more sustainable, digital and resilient tourism and hospitality ecosystem can undoubtedly become a reality. Hospitality sector and services,

tour operators and travel agents will have a key role to play in helping destinations to shape their offer and in informing, educating and convincing the customers to think responsibly.

Education and trainings will be necessary in order to provide understanding of possibilities for responsible and sustainable tourism products. EUSAIR Action plan started its process of revision, it will build upon the previous actions and flagships, it will need a roadmap, and well defined terms of reference, but diversification and sustainable management of tourism remain at the core of this future process.

Thank you very much hoping that we have all learned a lot and benefited from the Conference!