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PRESS RELEASE

INSiGHTS - A project with a proven need

Internal thematic meeting in Vienna on development of tourism strategies

Partners from Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia met **at the 2nd internal thematic meeting** within the **INSiGHTS** project - **“Integrated Slow, Green and Healthy Tourism Strategies”**. The meeting took place in Vienna, Austria on the 10th May 2017 and was hosted by the **University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna (BOKU)**.

Partners were discussing the progress of work packages on Local Strategies, analysing the answers of their pilot destinations on the Self-Assessment manual. The manual was prepared by BOKU under the expert guidance of prof. **Ulrike Pröbstl-Haider** for mapping local resources, analysing strengths and weaknesses, and setting sustainability goals in the respective destinations: »With the help of ‘smileys’ the workshop in Vienna was dedicated to the evaluation of the Status Quo analysis and the exchange of information between the various partners. Each destination explained the outcomes of their stakeholder involvement. This first step shows that all study regions in the project want to improve their destinations’ strategy, the socio-economic benefit for their region and the quality of visitors’ experiences through product development. The workshop also made visible that the awareness of local offers and the unique products in the piloting regions are quite different – it is not so easy to see what is your own “beauty” and extraordinary offer«.

During the project meeting in Vienna partners also discussed the Stakeholder involvement activity presented by the director of **Pons Danubii, Zoltán Bara**, and the State-of-the-art good practices approach, moderated by **Krisztina Campbell** and **Michael Mayer** from the **CEEweb for Biodiversity**. The research of good practices has proven to be important. “Young regions can learn from those with well-established offers. Others may learn how to make shoulder seasons (spring and autumn) more attractive”, explained prof. Ulrike Pröbstl-Haider.

The focus of the meeting was also on designing a concept of workshops, including study visits, a critical classroom and a master class. The first bilateral study visit will be organized in June 2017 in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, where the **Regional Development Agency with Business Support Centre for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises** will be hosting project partners from Serbia. A workshop combined with the 3rd thematic meeting of the project is planned for June 2017, when the **Regional Economic Development Agency for Šumadija and Pomoravlje** will host all INSiGHTS project partners in Aranđelovac, Serbia.

About the project

The 30-months long project (January 2017 – June 2019) was approved within the **Interreg Danube Transnational Programme** financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

The INSiGHTS project is about **finding solutions for making regions more attractive to tourists** by developing tourism strategies that keep in the focus the protection of natural and cultural resources. Regions in INSiGHTS all have outstanding natural and cultural resources, and at the same time they have a great potential related to the fast-growing recreational trend of slow, green and healthy tourism.

Partners are working in close cooperation with stakeholders in eight regions to gain relevant local feedback on the current situation of tourism and also ideas and proposals for new opportunities for slow, green and healthy tourism. There will be **eight integrated sustainable tourism strategies** developed by the partner regions and they will be adaptable all across the Danube Region.

For more information about the INSiGHT project please visit: www.interreg-danube.eu/insights

Contact:

Emőke Tóth, Pons Danubii European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, Slovakia

Lead partner

Námestie generála Klapku 1, Komárno, Slovakia

Email: komunikacia@ponsdanubii.eu, telephone: +421 353 811 327

Eva Vovk, Development Centre of the Heart of Slovenia, Slovenia

Coordinator of Communication Activities

Kidričeva 1, 1270 Litija, Slovenia

Email: eva.vovk@razvoj.si, telephone: +386 1 896 27 17