

PROJEKT EXCOVER – TRANSNATIONAL MEETING FOLLOW-UP REPORT

EXCOVERING POTENTIALS OF FRIULI REGION

„Welcome to the inner part of our country, not so recognized on tourist market, but with numerous potentials. Our task is to increase awareness of the public about those potentials, but also to use this project to open eyes of the local population for the possible ways in which we can work together towards this common goal", commented Francesco Brollo, mayor of town Tolmezzo while greeting Excover partners at Ovaro, during the 3rd Transnational partner meeting, held on several locations of the Friuli region in northern Italy.

Working sessions and study visits revealed tourist potentials of the region

Some of the tourist potentials of the region were presented to Excover partners, who, during the three days visited and experienced several interesting locations: castle Castello di Arcano and its intriguing history, bunker/fortress Forte di Col Roncòn in the vicinity of Rive d'Arcano which is repurposed in multifunctional space used for cultural and social purposes, hills of Carnia which are hiding small municipality Ovaro and its Museo da Plêf, church Pieve of Santa Maria di Gorto, and magical land of watches in Pesariis.

The meeting started with an WP3 overview, hosted by the municipality of Rive d'Arcano, followed by fruitful discussions about the methodology of the conducted analysis, and plans for the following period set at Ovaro, after which all ended with a working session at the University of Udine oriented towards positioning strategy that will be developed in the following months.

Next step – defining the positioning strategy

Challenge of the positioning strategy lies in the fact that Excover partners are trying to unify broad spectre of interesting but undiscovered locations. To come up with a solution that will be equally useful for each partner the strategy will be created around things which are distinctive and appealing for each town or area. It will be based on results provided by the SWOT analysis, and developed based on a common cross-border methodology defined by the WP leader partner. Positioning strategy will also assess the usefulness and practicability of a joint brand – linking the places involved in the project.

What is destination positioning?

Whether or not partners decide that shaping of a joint brand is useful and practical, they all agree that the hidden gems of the region should have a distinctive place in the minds of their potential visitors. To carve a niche in the tourist market this „Excover area“ should claim a position that evokes and projects images and feelings in the visitors minds. This process is called positioning and it can follow several different approaches, which partners will decide upon during the following months: positioning by price value, positioning in respect to use or application (based on reasons for visiting the destination), positioning by the class of the visitors, positioning with respect to a tourist product class (associating destination with experiences that are extraordinary and/or unique), positioning in regard to competition.

Main challenge – linking diversity

„In the following period we are facing some tough decisions that will shape the final results of the project. It will be interesting to see how will we use our creative potentials and come up with joint solutions for promotion of our diverse, but unique cultural and natural resources“, commented Martina Šuper Štampar, director of the Public institution Development agency of Lika Senj County – Lira, lead partner of the project Excover.

Next gathering of the Excover partners is expected in February 2020 in Bologna, during which the partners are expected to compare and harmonize the results of the territorial analysis.