

Integrated Urban Development of Vital Historic Towns as Regional Centres in South East Europe

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How to capitalise on tourism opportunities in local revitalization schemes? (A transnational output for WP4/Action 4.5.)

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1. Introduction: Cultural heritage, tourism and spatial development

Cultural heritage has been a key notion in European spatial policies, as well as in national and local development strategies for two decades. It is considered a source of identity: a pillar of personal integrity of individuals as well as of community building. At the same time, inspired by the Lisbon strategy, it is also considered as a basis for long-term economic growth due to its uniqueness and the expansion of tourism industries exploiting such assets. In South East European context, cultural heritage tourism has a particular relevance. Due to its significance in European history, it contributes largely to the production of added value (Italy, Greece) – while it is also a source of socio-spatial inequalities within tourism-dependent national economies. Moreover, in the new member states of the EU, cultural heritage is considered as an asset upon which local/regional strategies for economic restructuring (particularly, in backward areas) could rest (see e.g. *van Kempen et al, 2005*).

European spatial policies put balanced socio-spatial development – social cohesion – and the sustainable growth of regions in the focus to respond to the challenges that all member states and the EU institutions face with:

- Climate and energy risks;
- Increasing dependence of local economies on non-local factors/agents;
- The extension and deepening of the European common market (spatial division of labour);
- Demographic problems, particularly, ageing and migration that hit regions highly selectively;
- The overexploitation of natural and cultural resources.

Such challenges and risks should be tackled by

- Exploiting diverse local/regional potentials,
- Sustainable use of such resources in social and environmental terms,
- Linking people, places and regions,
- Supporting the cooperation of all actors or local/regional development (*Territorial Agenda, 2007; Leipzig Charter, 2007*).

Spatial development documents put a particular emphasis on the protection and use of cultural heritage of towns and cities – discussing it in the context of the above-mentioned challenges and principles. The *Territorial Agenda* devoted 3 articles (25-27) to the sustainable use and protection of cultural heritage, stressing:

“ The irreplaceable values of European ecological structures and cultural and natural heritage, especially cultural landscapes and the quality of design and process on architecture as well as the built environment, should constitute, against the background of the respective regional circumstances and potentials, the foundation for environmentally and culturally oriented development which offers development perspectives, whilst safeguarding diverse cultural identities, particularly, in regions that are lagging behind or undergoing structural changes.”

For this, the Agenda proposes the support of local and regional projects to develop and promote cultural routes and networks, and transnational cooperation to exchange knowledge and support local initiatives related to cultural heritage tourism.

Cultural heritage is discussed in local – urban – context in the *Leipzig Charter*, in relation to:

- Development of high-quality public spaces as soft factors for knowledge economy as well as a source for identity – focusing largely on protection and conservation;
- Modernization of urban infrastructure to improve buildings' energy efficiency and the quality of life for inhabitants;
- Protection of compact urban structures – thus, avoiding the abandonment of inner (historical) areas;
- (Implicitly) upgrading physical environment in deprived urban areas – thus, supporting social inclusion through physical upgrading of historical structures/buildings;
- (Implicitly) economic stabilisation of deprived neighbourhoods based on endogenous economic forces, such as developing cultural tourism and thus, supporting related businesses.

Recently, a number of case-studies and lessons learnt from transnational knowledge exchange have been published, discussing the contradictions and the consequences of the above-discussed principles – the rise of new urban policies in Europe and the conflicts raised by local development practices, such as cultural heritage tourism projects. The most widely discussed issues are:

- Growth of tourism (in general, of the urban economy) as exploitation of local society and culture – selling urban space as symbolic capital, endangering “liveability” of towns and identities attached to historical spaces (see e.g. Cochrane, 2007; Raco, 2003, 2005; Fainstein, 2005; Koskela, 2000);
- Suffering of local societies from environmental damage and its negative externalities (see e.g. Bryson et al, 2004; Girard-Nijkamp, 2009);
- Negative economic externalities of growth, such as changing use of urban space, rising property prices, polarisation of real estate markets and of the local society (see e.g. Hamnett, 2001; Smith, 2002; Lowe, 2005; Vicario-Monje, 2005; Temelova, 2007; Timar-Nagy, 2012)
- The conflicts btw. the need for modernization of historical building stocks and structures and conservation principle (see e.g. Girard-Nijkamp, 2009; Momaas, 2004 Richards, 2001);
- The issue of authenticity of tourism experiences (see e.g. Halewood-Hannam, 2001; Moscardo, 2001; Munasinghe, 2006);
- The increasing competition of historical towns that produces a highly uneven landscape of cultural heritage tourism, and in a wider sense, of economic development and quality of life. In this contested arena, metropolitan regions hold a major stake of assets, facilities and also of visitors that raises challenges to small and medium size towns (see e.g. Richards, 2001).

To tackle conflicts and develop heritage tourism as a factor for urban and regional development and well-being for local people, European spatial development documents propose an integrated approach that should rest on the followings:

- Carefully research, define and involve all social groups concerned by the planned intervention – including stakeholders and target groups –, open up discussions about their views, interests and concerns reconciling and considering those during the planning and the implementation process, and getting a permanent feedback. A particular attention should be paid to making citizens aware and active in the development process; moreover, to involve private funding (by reconciling public and private interests) to make development financially sustainable;
- Cross over traditional disciplinary and expertise boundaries, and set up a common vision that rests on the appreciation of all aspects of everyday urban life, and consider social, economic and (built and natural) environmental issues as equally important. To have such an integrated view, discussions over urban development should involve different social groups and be organised by a cross-sectoral teams. Certainly, this approach should generate changes in local (regional) governance, shifting from administration-centered practices of municipalities (and other governmental bodies) toward an active and initiative agency;
- Consider interventions into urban space in a wider spatial context, viewing urban development as a regional process shape also the relationships of towns to their hinterland as well as to networks they are involved in. This spatially integrated approach – rested on the European traditions of “city in the region” idea – is proposed by the Charter to tackle the problems of urban sprawl (thus, preserving the socio-spatial structure of the “European city”), to make use of local assets as complementary sources of development and also to promote the economic restructuring and social stability of backward regions (for further details, see the ESDP, and the Territorial Agenda).
- Integrated approach should rest on long-term thinking about spatial development; this means, on the one hand the adoption of strategic view built upon earlier achievements (assets, values accumulated locally) and existing (sectoral, of area-focused) planning concepts; on the other hand, a framework should be provided for further development actions that rests on a common vision accepted and supported by all concerned social groups. Thus, taking integrated development as a process, the Leipzig Charter proposed a planning process that should follow this scheme:
 - A comprehensive analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the city and its region;
 - Definition of objectives and setting up a vision for the urban region;
 - Setting up a consistent planning framework (for that, revising all planning documents) for developing a balanced socio-spatial structure;

- For the above process, all concerned social groups should be brought together and involved in the planning process; moreover, public and private must be reviewed, the interests harmonised, and well-focused plans for investments should be set up.

The integrated approach towards the development and management of cultural heritage for the benefit of the local communities was employed in historical towns throughout Europe in diverse political/institutional and local contexts. Experiences in capitalising on tourism opportunities in different contexts provide useful insights and lessons for dealing with the highly complex issues of culture, economic development, public space and community identity, physical planning and conservation at once in the framework of integrated planning of heritage tourism. For this, the aim of this ViTo output is to review challenges and problems related to tourism and cultural heritage and to provide best practice examples responding to them. In the followings, we provide an overview of European experiences (chapter 2), and also the summary of problems that Vito partners faced with while their local revitalization projects as well of the responses given by them during the planning process (chapter 3).

2. Heritage tourism at work: local practises in European towns

The historic urban landscapes are not only the accumulations of built cultural heritages, but are living organisms and living spaces for its inhabitants, tourists and entrepreneurs. As the social, economic and ecological conditions (e.g. demographic change, growing economic competition, and climate change) are changing fast in the cities, they may cause imbalance of progress and preservation of the historic urban fabric. While the economic development may result in the loss of built cultural heritage and identity, the preservation of historic urban landscape often means economic stagnancy. These cities have to preserve their built cultural heritages and turn them to be the engine for the balanced polycentric development. There are several various attempts how to solve this situation. Numerous projects funded by the European Union aim to tackle or to solve this problem by approaching it from various directions.

The **SUIT** project (**Sustainable Development of Urban Historical Areas through an Active Integration within Towns, EU Fifth Framework Program: 2000-2003**) aimed to match existing historical areas with current socioeconomic requirements through an active integration of heritage within new development projects.

The main objective of the **CHORUS** project was (**Cultural Heritage Operations for the Regeneration of Urban Sites - URBACT: 2004-2006**) to refurbish old city centres and improve the quality of life in the cities.

In the project **CULTURE NETWORK** (**Cultural activities & creative industries, a driving force for urban regeneration - URBACT: 2004-2006**) the regeneration of the cities is based on cultural activities and creative industries.

According to the project **INHERIT** (**Investing in Heritage to Regenerate Heritage Cities - INTERREG IIIC: 2005-2007**) historic towns and cities can make an important contribution to the social and economic wellbeing of their regions. By realising the

potential of investing in their heritage cities can increase their capacity to regenerate physically, economically and socially.

The project **Hist.Urban (Integrated Revitalisation of Historical Towns to promote a polycentric and sustainable development - INTERREG IIB: 2006-2008)** aimed to strengthen the small and medium-sized historic towns outside the metropolitan areas by using their built cultural heritage as an asset for an integrated, sustainable urban development. The study aimed to support the socially, ecologically and economically well balanced sustainable revitalisation practices.

MISTTER (Military and Industrial SiTEs Reuse - INTERREG IIB CADSES: 2006-2008) is concerned with the reuse and revitalisation of brownfields, thus military and industrial sites.

The aim of the **ADHOC project (Adapted Development of Historical Old Towns in Central and Eastern Europe- INTERREG IIB CADSES: 2006-2008)** was the development and implementation of innovative approaches for a sustainable renewal of historic towns with numerous listed buildings.

According to the HerO Project (Heritage as Opportunity – Urbact II: 2008-2011) the situation cannot be solved by mono sectoral policies, but integrated sustainable urban development policies and management strategies are needed (cultural heritage as cross-sectional task). This way the cultural heritage may be used as an asset to strengthen the attractiveness and competitiveness of these historic towns. Thus integrated cultural heritage management systems have to be developed and implemented and used to balance and coordinate the different demands and interests on historic urban landscapes to support a sustainable, future-oriented urban development, which combines the preservation of the historic urban landscape with the socio-economic development.

The projects REPAIR (Realising the Potential of Abandoned Military Site as an Integral Part of Sustainable Urban Community Regeneration – Urbact II: 2008-2011) and CTUR (Cruise Traffic and Urban regeneration - Urbact II: 2008 - 2011) focus on such areas of the cities that are abandoned or scarcely used due to the withdrawal of military presence and due to the fallback of harbour functions. Both of the projects aim to carry out functional change at these sites. While the project REPAIR dealt with the re-use of the abandoned military assets, the CTUR aimed to make a link between the port location (and port activities) and the sustainable development or regeneration of the (port) city as a whole.

The aim of the project LINKS (Low tech Inherited from the old European city as a key for performance and sustainability - Urbact II: 2009-2012) is to improve the quality of life and create affordable and sustainable housing in the old historic centres of the cities while preserving the architectural identity.

2.1. Development and implementation of integrated cultural heritage management systems (integrated revitalisation)

Lublin (Poland)

Lublin is the 9th largest city in Poland. Out of its 345 000 inhabitants 12 000 people live in its old city that covers 120 ha. Since the 1990s, one of the city's priorities was to renovate and revitalise its historic neighbourhood.

The project was financed by public funds that were spent on buildings and infrastructure only, leaving behind the socio-economic challenges (like the diminishing population, the replacement of inhabitants by businesses) of the neighbourhood.

The main objective of Lublin was to create an integrated development plan and to encourage private property owners to invest. The creation of the integrated development plan was strongly supported by the citizens. The plan focused on the life of the neighbourhood (e.g. creating green areas, improving mobility, quality standards for renovation). The first plan was publicly discussed and was put on a webpage created to gather opinions on it. The establishment of the citizens' participative approach (the opinions of the inhabitants and other actors) is regarded to be a positive change in a post socialist country. The main objectives of the plan are thus defined. The plan was submitted to various stakeholders. A new urban planning plan is also created for the Podzamcze neighbourhood. The municipality took advantage of the HerO project, as it defined the new urban planning project with the help of the Local Support Group and the citizens. The plan aims to reduce the automobile traffic of the neighbourhood (a highway and a bus station is nearby damaging the quality of life and the architectural harmony in the city).

Source: HerO project

Vilnius (Lithuania)

The historic city centre of Vilnius (3.5 sq km), the capital city of Lithuania, is home to 20 000 inhabitants. It is listed as a World Heritage Site of the UNESCO since 1994.

The municipality of Vilnius and the State signed an agreement in 1997 establishing the joint management of the investments as to create a balance between the development and the preservation of the historical buildings of the old city. Apart from the agreement, there is no cooperation between the two, thus the municipality created an agency (ORTA) responsible for managing the renewal of the historic centre. The aim of Vilnius in the course of the HerO project was to create a joint management plan that would be accepted by the state. The created integrated management plan (2010-2020) is based on laws, on national and municipal level documents and strategies. The Ministry of Finance has also participated in the Local Support Group when the management plan was established. Among the goals and the action plans, mainly inherited from the Vilnius Strategic Plan (2002-2011), are creating community reception centres, improving the green areas, supporting financially the private property owners to maintain and renovate heritage.

Source: HerO

Regensburg (Germany)

The medieval centre of Regensburg dating back to the 14th century is home to 15000 inhabitants. The Old Town is an UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2006.

As the majority of the monuments have been carefully preserved, the main challenge of the city is to set a balance between heritage preservation and the economic development of the town in a neighbourhood where the population is rapidly growing requiring the creation of new infrastructures (housing, transport, telecommunication). The stakeholders in preserving the UNESCO Site were brought together by the Local Support Group of Regensburg and the integrated management plan was written based on six priority actions defined by the members: heritage, tourism, economic development, environmental issues, green spaces and communication. The plan was presented to the inhabitants of the city. The actions of the plan are coordinated by the municipality and the main private actors developing the plan. The plan will be updated regularly. The group set up for the implementation of the plan will meet every year and the citizens will be consulted every two years.

Source: HerO

Naples (Italy)

The historical centre of Naples is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Although the port of Naples is one of the largest in Italy in terms of passenger traffic (1.3 million annually) and it is growing, the tourism industry of the city has been declining since 2005 due to a slowdown in urban renewal work that is spoiling the image of the city (insecurity, cleanliness, etc.). The port of Naples is in the heart of the city, near to the main historical sites where numerous renewal projects are planned (e.g.: rehabilitation of waterfront areas, storage buildings and historical factories). As some recent actions were carried out by private partners, the Local Support Group (including for example the municipality and the port authority) established within the framework of the project chose to focus its efforts on waterfront area in front of the port and local area. The stakeholders forming the support group set the concrete objectives step by step. The activities of the group were disseminated with the help of primary and secondary school students. Due to the context provided by the project a better relation developed between the municipality and the port authority enabling to create a participative and bottom-up decision-making process. The participation of the local SMEs (crafts, investors, shops) enables their involvement in the renewal of the neighbourhood.

Source: CTUR

2.2 Functional change of the abandoned sites and the buildings out of use

Paola Corradino (Malta)

Paola Corradino is a city of 9500 inhabitants located on the island of Malta. The decline of the population was meant to be stopped by boosting the economic development, tourism and the attractiveness of the city by capitalising the historical heritage and the currently vacant buildings of the town. The city joined the REPAIR project with the aim to create a framework for coordinating these projects. During the developing phase of the Local Action Plan the opinions of the inhabitants on the project was collected as well. The key element of the rehabilitation plan is the reconvention of a former military site, namely a prison into a sporting complex. These abandoned military sites can act as catalyst for urban renewal for cities. For example in case of Paola the Local action plan also foresaw a green passageway and a kilometre long pedestrian area between the prison, the city centre and The World Heritage Site.

Source: REPAIR

Siracusa (Italy)

In Siracusa there are two good examples how to give new functions to building that are not used. The Conversion of the ancient convent and church of San Francesco da Paola was the intention of the city council. The purpose of the council was to use the building for cultural purposes. The restoration and conversion of the church of San Francesco da Paola was included in the broad concept of the PIT (Integrated program for territorialisation). Considerable work was necessary that included the structural repairs and underpinnings of foundations to make the building earth-quake resistant, facade restoration, roofing, strengthening structures, etc.

The conversion of the Palazzo Impellizzeri, one of the city's major monuments, into the Palace of Culture was also carried out based on the city council's decisions. The restoration of the palazzo was inevitable as on the one hand earthquakes caused severe damage in the buildings and on the other hand the gradual discontinuance of the earlier activities resulted in the neglect regarding the state of the building. The aim of the project was to save the monument and convert it into a dynamic centre for culture and vocational training. The works took place between 1998 and 2000. The palazzo houses the School of Architecture (with

1000 students, 120 professors and an administrative staff of 20), a conference centre (managing 150 events a year) and premises for cultural associations.

Source: CHORUS

2.3.. Improving the quality of life

The historic quarters of cities is usually the quarter where pubs, bars and restaurants are accumulated, which may lead to conflicts between the inhabitants of the area and the visitors.

Bayonne (France) for example is a city where the city centre, the “Petit Bayonne”, a traditional district for families, have turned to a residential spot for students and low-income populations. The quarter is dedicated all year long to students’ parties and to the festival of Ferias in August. Some of the streets are crowded and noisy even at night time, which result in conflicting situations with the elder inhabitants of the town. As to improve the situation the owners of the bars and the students were asked for joint problem solving. The municipality decided to close the bars at half past midnight and drinking alcohol on the street became forbidden as well.

Kilkenny (Ireland) is popular in Ireland for its “stag” and “hen” parties and the loud celebration of the visitors also disturbed the local residents. As to solve the conflict of the too loud parties and the residents the municipality also decided to ban drinking alcohol on the streets.

In France the “Rue de la soif” (“Thirst street”) is a frequent solution of cities to reduce the territory available for gathering and organising urban celebrations and events in night times. These streets are specialised to host night-life happenings thus the rest of the streets are partly relieved of the conflicts. Examples for using this policy can be found in several cities in France, like **Lille, Caen, Limoges, Angers**, etc.

Some cities have solved the problem by directing this activity away from the living historical city centres. For example **Bordeaux (France)** developed a leisure area in the former industrial quarters of the cities, by using up the ancient warehouses of the river docks.

Source: LINKS

Úbeda (Spain)

The 23 public spaces and squares of Úbeda had fallen into despair and are disused, which gives a negative character to the old town. Community perceptions were poor which lead to a considerable public pressure to regenerate the public spaces socially, economically and as well as environmentally.

The aims of this project were to reinforce the heritage quality of the old town by increasing the value of the public spaces. The modification of spaces improved their aspect and their functionality (e.g. the removal of inappropriate elements, inclusion of new infrastructure underground, relating to drainage and recycling facilities). During the restoration process the existing materials and elements, where they were damaged or had turned out to be insufficient or inadequate in relation to their function, were replaced partially or in whole. Conservation works were carried out where modification was not necessary and where materials were in good condition. The scope of the works involved re-evaluating the function of the spaces including the inclusion of new infrastructure underground, street furniture, street lighting and signage. From 1987 to 2006, some €66.7 million was spent on the funding of works, of which €22.7 million came from the City Council, the regional and state sources of funding were €19 million and the EU contributed €25 million from the Social and Structural Funds. The program had several benefits, among which the increased investment in the surrounding buildings, the attraction of over 30 new businesses, the increased economic

activity, the increase in the residential population within the old city (by 3% in two years) and the greater awareness of the community can be mentioned.

Source: INHERIT

2.4. Refurbishment of city centres

Belfast (UK)

Victoria Square, the South Eastern corner of the pedestrian zone of the city centre of Belfast, was an area underused and poorly integrated with the rest of the city centre. Due to the neglect and the lack of investments resulted in a declining environment which neither attracted the visitors nor the local pedestrians. The decline of the area experienced in the mid to late 20th century can be linked not only to the modern office development but also to its increasingly peripheral location. Its public space function was destroyed by the multi storey car park and office developments. In the 1970's and 1980's the situation of the area became even more difficult as it lay within the heavy security cordon around the city centre. During these troubled political times the area lacked investments that was mainly realised at other areas of the city (e.g. the area of High Street). The regeneration of the Victoria Square intended to provide a major retail extension to the city centre. The key to its regeneration was the desire to link the city centre with the developments around the River Lagan by ensuring that the regenerated Victoria Square encourages the flow of the pedestrians. The plans comprised regenerating this declining area, improving the retail offer of the street, delivering a wide range of environmental enhancement and creating a 24-hour secure environment. The aim of the project was to redevelop the site as to provide a mix of uses including retail, offices, leisure, catering, residential and civic and cultural activities.

Source: SUIT

Toledo (Italy)

The city of Toledo is inscribed to the list of World Heritage Site since 1986. Its heritage dates back more than 2000 years with numerous layers of various civilisations. The noble homes in the centre of Toledo were gradually abandoned in the 16th century as the noble families followed the royal court to Madrid, and the buildings suffered from definite decline since that era. Thus an instrument for the preservation of the historic Toledo had to be urgently developed. By 1980 a preservation plan has been developed, in 1997 a "special plan" was instituted by the city. A special agency (the Consortium) was established including representatives of the regional authorities, the municipality, the state and private enterprises. The Consortium collected funds, which was used to finance numerous carefully targeted projects. 60% of the funds were spent on housing (1000 projects), for monuments and archaeological heritage sites. Due to the visible results of the efforts, today the process has turned and the residents ask not to tear down the buildings but to continue the restoration works. In some cases the rate of subsidies has reached 100 per cent.

Source : CHORUS

Krakow (Poland)

In Krakow the Jewish community was mainly living in the neighbourhood of Kazimierz. In spite of their strong segregation, the community developed and left a rich and unique urban heritage (7 synagogues, 3 cemeteries, 500 listed buildings, etc.) to their successors. The 2nd World War halted the continuous development of the neighbourhood. The population of the Jewish community dropped from 60 000 to a mere 150 today. The architectural heritage was in severe danger due to lack of means and aggressive pollution. The turning point was in the early 1990s, when the change of political regime rendered it possible to begin the renewal of

the quarter. The first step was to let some families return from exile, who were followed by tourists with specific interests resulting in a growing artistic and intellectual atmosphere. The feverish speculation soon followed and continues to this day. The main objective of the project was to revitalise the Jewish quarter of Krakow while retain some control over the changes as to reconcile the social and economic development. The task is rather difficult as the status regarding the Kazimierz is constantly changing. A system for dialogue with the local residents and economic investors was implemented discussing the main issues of setting up a financial system, of keeping track of new retail houses, of managing the social change and controlling the subsidies given to private owners.

Source: CHORUS

2.5. Creating affordable and sustainable housing in the historic centres while preserving the architectural identity

Gdansk (Poland)

The Lower Town (Dolne Miasto) is the historical suburb of the city centre of Gdansk. This quarter of the city became populated as soon as the swampland was drained. It was a popular and wealthy living and recreational area, but by the 19th century the appearing new industrial and military functions resulted in a mixed functional character of living, service and production. It is the only historic district of the city that was not destroyed during the 2nd World War. Today the district is suffering from severe social, economic and infrastructural problems. It is “cut off” from the city centre by the river. The aim of the project is to upgrade the living qualities of the area. Plans cover three different aspects of regeneration: buildings and infrastructure, the local economy and the area’s social life. Renovation of both the storm water system and the buildings along the main roads of the district was planned. According to the plans the former tram depot will be turned into a shopping centre and on a longer timescale (up to 2025) further living space will be made available through renovation and building by the municipal housing enterprise. To bring back economic life an “enterprise incubator” is planned for the former rifle factory and the park area, rarely used by inhabitants or tourists, will be also upgraded. It was an important aspect of the regeneration program that the local inhabitants could to stay in the area. The local people were also involved in the development process which ensured for the plans to meet the needs of the community. Public engagement was necessary at an early stage of development, as the local community become used to the opportunity to participate in shaping their future. It was also an important task for the Lower Town to change its reputation as being a dangerous and unattractive part of the city.

Source: INHERIT

2.6. Cultural activities and creative industries

Gdansk (Poland)

The Grodzisko Fort is a remnant of the former city fortification, which once surrounded the historic city of Gdansk. After being the venue of several historical key events, in the 1920’s the fort lost its defensive character and was turned into a public park. The fort covers around 27 hectares and comprises a complex of post military building as well as residential and leisure uses. However the fort was open to the public, it did not attract many visitors, as it was behind the main bus station. As the fort did not play a significant role in the city life it was decided to turn it into an education and development complex designed to add to the cultural use of the city both for local people and visitors. Several parts of the fort were renovated and

were adapted to its new functions. A two-storey fortification building situated in the defensive trench now houses the “Energy” and the “Sky and Sun” workshops. The “Earth” workshop is set in the earthen ramparts. By inserting new functions into these heritage buildings the children and teenagers are able to learn about science and at the same time experience the historic surrounding of the fort. In the second phase of the project the centre will be completed by a planetarium, an education park displaying unusual plants and other rare species. The benefits of the project are that it creates enthusiasm for science among young people by presenting knowledge in an interesting and accessible way. Thus the fort may attract both families and whole school groups. The Gdansk Fortress is the organisation in charge of the implementation of the project. It is supported by a scientific advisory board, made up of members of Gdansk universities. The staff of Gdansk Fortress is responsible for the development and the management of the project. The project staff cooperates with different city departments and bodies responsible for city planning, European initiatives, development and investments. The total cost of the first stage of the project is about €5, 800, 000 and about half of it, was provided by the European Union within the regional programme ZPORR (Integrated Regional Operational Programme), with the balance from the Gdansk municipality, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Polish State. The estimated cost of the next stage of the project is about €25,000,000 and will form a series of applications for EU funding.

Source: INHERIT

3. Capitalising on tourism opportunities in ViTo partner towns

In Action 4.5. the ViTo project teams focused on integrated planning process (WP4) that target the revival of historical urban centres for local people as well as for tourists by supporting economic restructuring – in a sustainable way. Sustainability was considered in terms of preserving natural and built environment (including historical heritage), economic development (supporting local SMEs, creating jobs and enhance the incomes of local households), and quality of life of local people.

In reviewing local planning processes, we focused on new ideas and innovative solutions for revitalization and the use of cultural heritage for tourism development, as well as for managing conflicts stemming from enhanced cultural tourism. The following questions were addressed during group meetings and local workshops:

2. Concerning the role of cultural heritage in tourism development and tourism planning processes:

1.1. What is the role of cultural tourism in local (urban) development, in general? Is it a strategic issue?

1.2. How the role of historical heritage is defined in tourism development? How central issue is it to tourism? How its role is defined in relation to other local tourism opportunities? What historical heritage assets (events, spaces, buildings, etc.) are defined as tourism development assets?

1.3. What local weaknesses and what threats (e.g. regulations, national policies, competitors etc.) were defined in local documents (or perceived by you) that might endanger the development of local tourism, in particular, cultural tourism?

1.4. Is local heritage defined in regional (a wider spatial) context? What other places (cities, villages) are considered as complementary to your local offer? Is there any existing regional cooperation in tourism development?

2. In relation to local ViTo projects:

- 2.1. How/if your objectives of revitalization met tourism development aims? (Please, give some ideas, what worked/did not work and why!)
- 2.2. How the interests of local society and stakeholders of tourism development were articulated, and how their conflicts were reconciled in the participatory planning process?
- 2.3. What national legal conditions/regulations were defined that (might) support or hinder using historical heritage as a tourism asset? How could you overcome such difficulties locally?
- 2.4. What local, regional and national institutional capacities and deficiencies were defined that (might) support or hinder using historical heritage as a tourism asset? How could you overcome such difficulties, through cross-disciplinary/cross-expertise approach, cooperation btw. different levels of public administration and by capitalising on external expertise (best practices; hiring experts etc.)?
- 2.5. What synergies of public and private funds emerged in your revitalisation scheme?
- 2.6. What do innovations you think you realised locally in your local ViTo project that might be considered as a best practice and passed to other towns within your country or in SEE?

3.1. Identification of conditions for tourism development in historical towns

Although, ViTo towns planned and implemented the revitalization of historical spaces in different local and national contexts, all local experts stressed the significance of tourism resting on cultural heritage as a source of economic growth and well-being. Moreover, the conditions that were considered either as potentials/strengths or conditions that should be set up for heritage tourism development were largely overlapping.

- The physical structures, in particular, historical buildings, urban spaces (squares, streets, courtyards), monuments, archaeological sites, well-kept green areas (parks, river banks), the preserved (to-be-preserved) urban structures and possibly, the surrounding rural spaces are considered as a source of growth, of identity through their symbolic/historical meanings, as well as of well-being (leisure/experience). Such structures and spaces are defined as existing or potential public spaces and also assets to be exhibited at (used for) cultural events. The diversity of built heritage is defined as a condition for cultural tourism. Such diversity is supported also by the multiculturalism of towns in terms of language, religion, art and history, that is a real asset for many localities throughout SEE, as it was stressed by many ViTo partners.
- Nevertheless, such well-preserved assets are not sufficient conditions for attracting tourists. For this, events, such as traditions, art folk and other festivals, summer schools and professional meetings, fairs that take place at historical places are indispensable for fostering growth in local/regional tourism. Exhibiting traditional activities such as revived handicraft workshops, mines and farming also contribute to sustainable forms of tourism.

- All partners considered cultural heritage as a significant but insufficient source for tourism development. Most of the ViTo partners built local strategies upon several pillars, combining historical and cultural assets with treasures of the natural environment, traditional local activities, as well as with religious and business tourism.
- As a consequence, regional cooperation is an important issue for ViTo towns due to their size; they recognised the cooperation with the surrounding settlements as a source of diverse tourism offer, and of funding to manage infrastructure development (particularly, of transport), and also as a framework for managing land use.
- The conditions of capitalising on tourism opportunities include “hard” factors, such as accessibility of towns, public transportation and parking systems, diverse transportation modes for reaching historical sites and the modernization of public utility services. Moreover, the range and quality of services in historical centres, in particular, cultural and catering (hotels, restaurant, etc.) services are considered as key issues for attracting visitors.
- The “soft” factors of heritage tourism were also stressed by all ViTo partners in local analyses. The most important components of social support for tourism development are the i) awareness of local people of their heritage and its value; ii) involving local people as “hosts” and as potential entrepreneurs in “selling” historical places; iii) letting inhabitants know of the consequences of tourism development. To gain such support, the partners stressed the importance of permanent information flow, of the education of local people and of making the results of revitalization and tourism development visible. An other key component of social support is the cooperation civil organizations and institutions concerned by heritage tourism; they provide professional inputs, motivation, support information flow and set a framework for managing conflicts raised by revitalization and tourism growth. Collaboration of organisations located in towns and in their region was discussed widely; institutions of regional scope are counted as mediators (“umbrellas”) for setting up regional strategies for heritage tourism. Finally, the devotedness of local political, civil and institutional leaders, and their readiness for cooperation was mentioned as the third key “soft” factor. Such “soft” factors can contribute to sustainable tourism development in case of having a working framework for information flow, such as local media, websites, information centres, and local forums/meetings.
- In general, education is considered as a highly important factor for capitalising on tourism opportunities. Universities provide professional support for integrated planning and heritage management, generate tourism in itself (events) and might/do support the education of local stakeholders.
- Municipalities are considered also as key agents (stakeholders) in revitalization and heritage tourism, for planning, initiating and managing such developments, fostering regional and inter-urban cooperation, reconciling diverging interests. Moreover, the role of municipalities as owners is also highly significant; such properties might be scenes to local pilot projects to stimulate private actions.

- The institutional framework of urban and regional, as well as of heritage planning, and the existing planning background (strategic documents, regulations) provide a framework (in everyday practice, a guidance) to local tourism development. The stability of conditions for local development and regional cooperation rests upon the above-discussed conditions, and considered as highly important by the local experts from the new member states.
- As all ViTo towns are in need for information and knowledge (learning from others' experiences), as well as for funding, memberships in national and international associations, twinning, and participation in international programs is stressed by all partners. The role of the EU programs in terms of learning and financing, moreover, the UNESCO as means of marketing are considered particularly important.

Although, the above issues were discussed by all partners as highly important, group meetings and local workshops suggested a highly differentiated view of conditions and problems related to heritage tourism planning and development within SEE. Thus, we found that, the European policies targeting the sustainable use of cultural heritage of historical towns should adopt common policies that are sensitive towards this diversity, with particular regard to the following issues:

- Institutional capacities are diverse and were hit by the budgets cuts in the whole region;
- Different institutional cultures might result in very different planning processes (e.g. in terms of social participation and institutional cooperation) and new touristic uses (spaces) that are not sustainable in social, economic and environmental terms;
- The civil support of preservation and the use of historical heritage is different country by country, and place by place; local solutions for involving people should be supported and spread as much as possible;
- The hiccups of public-private cooperation has many forms in SEE, but it seems to be a general problem: in financing and giving a kick to revitalization, public ownership is significant; moreover, there is a general need for mutual learning about “business” and “public” way of thinking about heritage tourism;
- We have diverse planning contexts and still insufficient set of planning documents; nevertheless, there is a need for local and regional tourism strategies as well as urban and regional development strategies that are consistent, and (al together) should provide a framework for the development of heritage;
- The above-discussed differences are reinforced by the diverse landscape of accessibility, of infrastructural conditions, and by the national and local funding conditions.

In this, way, despite local efforts and results, sustainable heritage tourism is highly dependent on non-local factors, and needs further support in the framework of the EU spatial and cohesion policy.

3.2. Local lessons and best practices I: Capitalising on tourism opportunities in Banská Stiavnica

Banská Stiavnica is a small town inhabited by 11,000 residents. It is a centre for a small region, covering a rural (mostly, mountainous) area of 9,000 inhabitants. The local economy collapsed in the transition period (early 1990s); a slow recovery based on the local service sector and on regional tourism potentials has begun in the 2000s.

The situation in Banská Stiavnica is unique in the ViTo project. The historical 'Old Town' is part of the UNESCO World Heritage List (1977), so the protection and use of built heritage has a long history locally. The weak point of that situation was the lack of local new strategic development documents, that's why the former actions rooted in UNESCO and national level framework and subsidies. As a result of the ViTo project, 5 new local (regional) development strategies were created with a wide collaboration of local experts, external expertise and other stakeholder groups, including local residents. The most general document is the local urban development strategy, in which built heritage and tourism issues are in the core. It is not a surprise, that the other documents – Development Plan of the historical centre of Banská Stiavnica, Cultural management plan, Analysis of Regional Co-operation opportunities in the Banská Stiavnica Region, and Financial and non-financial incentives and instruments to activate property owners of historic buildings – concentrate mainly on the problem of historic heritage in different ways and from different points of view.

The specific situation in the town involves that cultural (particularly built) heritage lies in the core of any tourism-related documents and strategies. The size and importance of the historic urban centre compared to the size of the town (10 thousand residents) made experts give special attention to the problem of cultural heritage. The history of the town is closely related to mining (going back to 800 years) and some tourism potentials of the surrounding region connected to the remaining objects of that activity (mines, water reservoirs, channels, spa, ski resort, some institutions, partner connections from abroad etc.). Any other tourism opportunity has secondary importance compared to the cultural heritage of Banská Stiavnica (e.g. mountain biking, cross-country skiing, local/regional events). Regarding the overall situation, the 'Old Town' district and its specific objects are defined as assets of historical heritage, but some traditional events (Salamandra Festival, Festival of Crafts, twin-city programs) connected to that development 'hot spots'. There are some nodal points of historical buildings inside the historical district, as well, such as Old Castle (13th century origin), New Castle (17th century), two churches in the main square, Lyceum, Headquarter of Regional Mining Authority, Mining Museum etc.

One of the major weaknesses locally is the limited sources for renovation and conservation of built heritage. The Municipality had to learn how to combine local sources with national level funds (mainly from the Ministry of Heritage) and EU-Funds. There are problems with ownership of historical buildings, too. After the

transition, most of the properties were privatised, and in several cases the owner has no money for renewal. However, there are funding opportunities with 95% level of financing. The structure of ownership is diverse: there are properties that belong to the municipality, to different churches (Roman Catholic, Lutheran), to institutions (mainly regional), to companies and individuals. Many apartments in historical buildings are rented by local companies (e.g. services, restaurants, coffee shops) and NGOs, as well as by regional, national or international corporations (e.g. shops, banks, insurance companies) for a long term. The diverse interests of tenants made it difficult to set up an overall strategy for the area.

The threats to heritage development are rooted in the different legal frameworks of different spatial levels/scales. There are specific rules for renovating and re-using a house under local, national, or UNESCO heritage. In several cases, the owners try to find a gap among the rules to use their property in an improper way in the historical district.

The geographical location is an other obstacle: the historical centre itself is a bottleneck of local transportation. The valley, where the most impressive building located is very narrow, there is very limited space for large scale investments, including hotels, parking lots, large scale exhibition areas. In some other European towns, the lack of floor in the surface forced the communities to built underground facilities (e.g. parking), but the mining in (and under) Banska Stiavnica limits this opportunity.

Banska Stiavnica is the most important node of regional tourism in the wider region, but co-operation with the surrounding municipalities is developing. The mining tradition is common in the surrounding area, and some tourism activities rest on this possibility (biking, lakes, active tourism, monuments of mining). The national legal framework helped small- scale actions and allowed local stakeholder groups to create a Tourism Destination Management (TDM) organisation for the region. As a result of co-operation of the surrounding municipalities and, of the actors in regional tourism, an analysis for regional collaboration was prepared. This strategic document proposed strengthening the role of TDM-organisation, setting up a periodical (twice a year) forum of local mayors, improving the communication among stakeholder groups and last but not least, it defined the major topics for economic co-operation. This analysis could be a strong basis for a regional strategic document for developing tourism.

The social participation of local stakeholders – and of all residents – was a key momentum of local planning process. The local team made a brainstorming on development actions, collecting the ideas of local residents and of stakeholders (incl. locals and non-locals). After a two-circle selection process, they chose two pilot projects for implementation. Both of pilots had close connections to protecting and using built heritage inside the ‘Old Town’ district. One is a beautification project around the ‘Old Castle’, renovating the formerly existing gardens, for leisure of local

residents and of tourists, too, who always visit that Castle when they come to Banska Stiavnica. The other one is a renovation of a historical building with new function as a local community space, but open for visitors, as well.

The restoration process went back to decades in the town, providing local best practices for renovation of buildings with traditional and quite new functions. Nevertheless, local experts learnt from failures, too. In several cases, the buyers in the privatisation process considered the building as an investment, just for selling it at in the boosting period of the property market. In some cases, the planned rebuilding of the properties did not fit the historical heritage at all, and the Municipality had to stop the project, without any incentives and instruments to force the owner to renovate the house and put it back to the original form. In some cases, the owner has no sources even to apply for renovation grant. Most of them want to sell the building, but in the last 3-4 years, due to the global crisis, the property market did not prosper. The size of the town in this case matters. The overall population of Banska Stiavnica is appr. 10 thousands, thus, local social relations are really tight. It is an opportunity for the local decision makers to understand the real needs of residents. In practise, there were a number of workshops organised for residents, institutions, companies, and other potential stakeholders by the municipality moderated by external experts. There were 20-30 participants at the meetings. It was a useful and efficient tool for collecting ideas, that were included in the new strategic documents of the town. As it was presented by local experts, there were no heavy conflicts among stakeholder groups, basically, due to the clear and shared vision of the town and its region, focused on cultural heritage and related tourism activities.

The majority of the historical houses in the 'Old Town' district are under national level protection. Regulations are rather strict, particularly, on the protection of the main structure and core elements of architecture. Such regulation put limits on the activity of owners in the renewal process. On the other side, there is an existing opportunity to apply for funds for renovation/restoration of old historical buildings with a 95% level subsidy from the Ministry of Heritage, Slovakia. That is a good opportunity to help the owners to begin a large scaled restoration program, with limited own-resources.

The size matters in an other way, too. There is a very active team in the town, including the experts of municipality, some external experts from Banska Stiavnica, (local companies, local NGOs) and from non-local organisations, too. The special knowledge of external experts helped (will help) local decision makers and local intelligentsia to widen their horizon and look at the local problems from a broader point of view. As a consequence, the structure of the local municipality was reorganized after the local elections in 2010. This change resulted in a flatter structure based on a horizontal/inter-departmental cooperation. The group from the reorganized municipality and the experts formed a very impulsive and innovative team with a cross-disciplinary and cross-expertise approach. The co-operation between local decision makers and other levels of public administration is better than

it was 5-6 years before. This collaboration means help from professionals from the region, from Ministries. Nevertheless, the flow of information is almost top-down, the higher level do not need responses from local levels.

In the local ViTo project, there is no possibility to mix the two types of sources. As we see, in the historical centre the just renovating/renovated houses were funded by national grants (Ministry of Heritage) combined with private sources of individuals, companies and NGOs. The buildings belong to churches were in the worst condition in the very centre. These houses had given to them after 1990 and they had no resources to renovate them and fill it with new functions. After two decades, the churches try to sell the properties, but there is no interest for buying, because of the rigid regulation of use and renew.

The Banska Stiavnica case is very interesting, in general. The lack of sources at local level (municipality, owners, companies, individuals), raised new, innovative approaches in local developments in the last decade. For pilot projects, there was no need for a large amount of money, but for a wide-range of co-operation among local actors and stakeholders. The local team used/uses the different media channels (radio, posters, homepage, Facebook, TV) and local meetings in an innovative way to activate actors. As the first results of former project grew visible, the level of activity increased. Under the ViTo project, only two pilots were implemented, but the collection of ideas was so successful, that one more idea will set up using the own sources of the municipality. The new organisational structure of the municipality (less hierarchical, more cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary, collaboration-oriented) is clearly an innovative tool for sustainable development of heritage tourism. It was also an innovation for overcoming the bottlenecks of local human capacity, to employ external expertise in planning process. Finally, a well-working co-operation emerged in regional context in the field of tourism development, and wider in economic actions and communication between Banska Stiavnica and surrounding settlements.

3.3. Local lessons an best practices II: Capitalising on tourism opportunities in Oradea

Oradea is a medium size town inhabited by 206.000 residents. Due to its turbulent history, it is a multicultural city in terms of language, religion and art. It is a regional centre defined as a second-rank town within Romania, with a diverse range of public institutions – including a university –, business services and also of logistic and manufacturing industries. Despite its rich cultural heritage, growing economy, and openness of local leaders, local people perceive its position peripheral. As a response, Oradea strengthened its cooperation at regional scale (Zona Metropolitana), in cross-border relations (Bihar/Bihor Euroregion), and also at European level. Although, the crisis and national budget cutbacks hit local economy

heavily, Oradea has local assets as a basis to thrive, including the rich cultural heritage that is a strategic issue or development.

The major elements of local tourist attraction are the Citadel (medieval Fortress from the late Turkish period), the buildings of the Historic City Centre built in different architectural styles, dominantly Secession/Art Nouveau from the 19th century. Visitors coming in Oradea are focus on built heritage and much less the specific events, or cultural offer. That's why the city plan a thematic tourism route based on built heritage with other European cities.

The major events in Oradea are focused on and around the Fortress area. There are 4 major festivals in a year (including Medieval Festival and Autumn Festival), attracting handicrafts, popular artists, authentic singers and bands. Autumn Festival has a more diverse program structure to attract a wider audience from local residents and visitors. The municipality has a budget for annual festivals, and external organizer companies applying for that money item per item offering a complete program for the decision makers.

Oradea is a centre of different religious communities and their institutions (orthodox, Roman Catholic, protestant, Jewish etc.) that is reflected by local culture and the built heritage (churches, monasteries). The further foci of cultural life are the local theatre, open-air theatre, art schools – however there are no special events roganised by or around them (except Theatre Festival in cooperation with Debrecen from Hungary).

The strategic planning in the field of tourism rooted in national level strategy and sectoral plans for the NUTS2 region fro whcic, Oradea is a sub-centre 8sharing the central functions with Cluj). All local documents of Oradea are adjusted to higher level goals and priorities. In the case of Romania a top-down planning system exist in tourism (based on the EU regulations), that is supervised by Ministry of Tourism. The institutional background for tourism development is highly concentrated in Romania: paradoxically, the decision-making bodies are concentrated in Bucharest, where no representatives of cities, counties or regions are employed. The Management Authority for EU Funds settled also in Bucharest also has a crucial role, because funds available for tourism developments are dominantly from the EU. The Ministry of Tourism has limited national sources and programs; this body prepares legislation, and regulations for applying fro and using of EU Funds). The only national level development actions concentrated on particular areas of tourism within Romania (defined in Bucharest), but Oradea and its region is not eligible for such funding.

At local level, Oradea has not a separate strategic document only for tourism, but the newly finished Marketing Strategy for Historical Centre covers the major fields and themes of local tourism development. The majority of tourism 'hot spots' lay inside that area, but some important tourism destinations and potentials are outside the historical centre (e.g. the spa complex in Felix).

The different needs and interests of actors resulted conflicts between stakeholders and target groups within the tourism sector. One of the sources of conflicts was an innovative tool in local taxation: owners of historical buildings are obliged to pay tax for a municipal fund, to support the renovation of the facades of Historical Centre. This fund offered a tool for the Municipality to solve an urgent problem and not to use public money for renovating private-owned properties – that is forbidden in Romania. Apart from local taxation, the municipality has (limited) legal opportunity to push/motivate owners fro renovation and thus, protect built heritage. The conflict was

stemming from the particular ownership conditions of the post-socialist transition – the privatisation of the housing stock: now, many owners are too poor to pay the tax; while in other cases, owners are foreigners, or has very good connections to local and national level politics to avoid tax. The sum of this local tax quite small, and inadequate to solve the problem of physical renewal; the low quality of built heritage might not attract visitors into Oradea and decrease its tourist potential.

Conflicts stemming from the highly centralised institutional structures did rise in the planning process and also on daily practices of heritage managements: the local department of National Office for Heritage Protection doesn't act a partner in the negotiations on local revitalization; they focus purely on conservation of historic buildings without considering the wider context for re-using and sustaining the built heritage.

Another field of local conflicts is related to traffic calming inside the historical centre. A part of stakeholders try to push local decision makers to increase the number of parking places inside, attracting a higher level of traffic, but let the visitors to come and look around in the Historical Centre. The opposition wants to move the personal traffic out of the Centre and develop dominantly public transformation all around the city. This problem, concerns the short-term goals municipal budget, too: the higher number of parking places (higher number of visitors) means higher incomes, while the other way of development needs large investments, without increasing local resources, that works against the sustainable development of heritage tourism.

Regional co-operation is in the beginning phase, between Oradea and Bihor County. They publish together the annual event calendar, but co-organised festivals, or thematic paths are not existing yet. Collaboration inside Oradea Metropolitan Area focused on tourism has not been developed yet, even though, the organisational framework has been set up by the Act on Regional Development (2006). A weak point of local tourism is the lack of information point, or organization in the city (with, or without the County). The information flow between City Hall and Bihor County seems not effective, they applied parallel for opening such an Information Point and that was the reason to reject both applications.

The local human capacity is limited inside the City Hall, but a network of external experts, in cooperation with city hall officials, are developing concepts and project schemes for specific problems in tourism. The planned Strategic Committee including such groups of experts and representatives of local NGOs is expected to help to activate local stakeholders, and the co-operation between them.

In the ViTo project context, heritage tourism is a key issue. Local ideas and schemes are corresponding with ViTo aims – as well as with regional and national level regulations. The major actors of tourism sector were not identified as a specific focus group in the local ViTo project, but some representatives were involved in different phases of the planning and implementation process. Moreover, the local department of National office for Heritage Protection was proposed for collaboration, as external expert. Owners of local hotels, pensions, restaurants, bars were also invited to give their opinion in the phase of planning, but they were not very active. For the proposed Strategic Committee, representatives of tourism sector shall invited.

As far as funding is concerned, there are rather limited synergies between public and private sources in tourism – basically, because of the lack of large-scale public funds. That's why it is difficult to motivate private actors to spend their resources under the regulation of renewing historic buildings. There some separate actions to attract more

visitors into Oradea (renovation of hotels, restaurants, bars, clubs) in Historic Centre. Local residents in the city centre take care for their courtyards, but any locally organized grassroots actions (e.g. for city beautification) are missing.

The major lessons from ViTo project supporting local heritage tourism development for the Oradea ViTo team came from Graz concerning the participatory planning and implementation process – in particular, the tools for motivating stakeholders for partnership with the City Hall along the whole process of the local development actions.

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