

Press Release - 05/03/2021

Webinar: Discussion about the project “Nautical Tourism Development and Promotion of Regional Ports”

On March 5th was held the webinar – Discussion about the project “Nautical Tourism Development and Promotion of Regional Ports” funded by Interreg IPA CBC, Italy – Albania – Montenegro (Implementation Period 2018-2021). This webinar was focused on nautical tourism and the necessity to develop a common model for the smart and sustainable NT management through an integrated development plan.

The online event was organized in collaboration with the Lead Partner of the project, *National Coastline Agency* and also *Ministry of Tourism and Environment in Albania, Municipality of Molfetta, Municipality of Termoli, Upi Puglina, Port Hercegnovi* and *InSET*.

Part of this webinar were: Mr. Thomas Papadiotis, representative from the Municipality of Molfetta, Mr. Cloridano Bellocchio, representative from the Municipality of Termoli, Prof. Dr. Klodiana Gorica from InSET, Mrs. Gentiana Troplini from National Coastline Agency and Mrs. Bora Boraj from CEDIR.

Prof. Dr. Klodiana Gorica, Executive Director of Institute for Sustainable Development, Environment and Tourism made the welcoming remarks for the webinar and additionally presented her study regarding Marine Tourism in the main Context Analyses. The global pandemic, had an undisputable impact especially on the tourism-dependent countries so Mrs. Gorica highlighted the need to revitalize the sector through new mechanisms such as nautical tourism and she said that these meetings with the involvement with all the stakeholders are crucial to further develop and create new ideas and platforms in order to be ready for the future of our destinations (referring the Balkan region) regarding the product of *nautical tourism*.

As the external expert of the project Mrs. Gorica made a presentation regarding the assessments and analysis of current conditions of Nautical Tourism in Albania. Furthermore, important part of her presentation related to the main topic of this webinar were the observations InSET made about strategic tourism planning and Nautical Tourism as part of the *blue economy*. Her expert opinion went beyond, giving an overview about SWOT analysis for the product taken in this discussion, nautical tourism. She stated that sustainability is a very important issue for the future of tourism in Albania.

Maritime Tourism is a very important notion for the tourism- dependent economies as Albania and the region because it assures inclusive and sustainable economic growth, social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction, resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change, mutual understanding, peace and security and enhances cultural values, diversity and heritage.

The next panelist was Mr. Thomas Papadiotis from the Municipality of Molfetta. He made a presentation regarding the thematic routes in North Puglia and their impacts in the territory. Mr. Papadiotis introduced the audience with the region of Puglia, tourism and specifically the nautical tourism. He went beyond the concepts digging deep in an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threads of the nautical tourism in the Puglia region. Moreover, Mr. Papadiotis introduced the thematic routes highlighting that Puglia is a region rich in cultural assets, rich in traditions and handicrafts, high quality of Eno gastronomy and a diversified cuisine. He

introduced the thematic routes beginning with the first along the Adriatic that is a seaside route, with 6 stops from Giovinazzo to Margherita di Savoia, approximately 50 km long. The second route, through history and religion is focused in historical and religious side in the most traditional type of visitors. Starting from Molfetta to Ruvo di Puglia with 7 stops, approximately 110 km long. The third route is called Stroll in the Park highlighting all the points of interest in the Alta Murgia National Park with 10 stops, suggested by foot, hiking or by bike. The last route introduced is called Among Vineyards and Delicacies.

The discussion was followed by Mr. Cloridano Bellochio from the Municipality of Termoli. He introduced destination Molise among routes, islands, villages and paths. He stated that is very important to create networks and touristic products, to organize a new model of marketing and promotion, to define new models and elaborate a new narrative. After doing several studies in the area, SWOT analyses etc. they have come to identify some itineraries linked to nautical tourism and regional ports. Currently, in Molise, there are two functional ports and one other under construction. The main objective of all the studies and efforts is to connect these ports with the nautical tourism in this small region. During the presentation, Mr. Bellochio introduced five thematic routes suggested in destination Molise regarding the nautical tourism engaging ports and also dedicated to all of the tourists that love the contact with the nature. The five thematic routes introduced in the region of Molise are:

1. Blue Itinerary – sea. This itinerary offers the access to islands, terraces, ports ect.
2. Mountain Itinerary
3. Urban-Central Itinerary
4. Itinerary of Traditions
5. Itinerary of Art and Culture

These thematic routes are well-connected with each-other and they offer the potential to an integrated and non-seasonal tourism. The problem that Mr. Bellochio identified is that the destination Molise has an absolute need for ports related tourism model for an all-year tourism. Certainly, the proposed itineraries enhance a well-organized 4-seasons tourism.

The last presentation in this webinar was done from Mrs. Bora Boraj, representative of Center for Economic Development and International Relations. She emphasized the need for development of Nautical Tourism and other forms of tourism in Albania that is still strong linked with seasonality and has a lack of appropriate planning for tackling seasonality in tourism. The aim of the study she presented is envisaging a plan to constitute an innovative approach in tourism industry. She went deep exploring the concept of nautical tourism and its benefits as a basis for further development and planning. She said that nautical tourism is one of the most important kind of recreational tourism that contributes to the general development of the economy by fostering growth and development through current activities and those related with them.

The Lead Partner of the project *National Coastline Agency* was represented by Mrs. Gentiana Troplini that made the final speech regarding the importance of this kind of projects in tourism in order to share information and learn from Albania's partners that have a broader experience and a more developed tourism industry. The main objective is to determine how the stakeholders will benefit from these projects. She stated that nautical tourism in Albania is facing huge problems regarding the lack of legislation. Also, the importance of sustainability in a four seasons tourism combining historical and cultural attributes is incontestable.

The webinar was attended from more than 80 people for a duration of almost two hours.

To summarize, the purpose of the project "Nautical Tourism and Regional Ports" is the creation of Thematic Routes is as to fully exploit the assets of the coastal and the inland areas, considered as a unified and interconnected natural system, by developing a Tourism Development Plan to study the sites of the intervention area based on REGLPORTS approach.

See you in the next webinar!

You are invited to follow the full webinar on link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YS5-P6hRMTQ>

For information about the project: <https://reglports.italy-albania-montenegro.eu/home>