



Newsletter n°4 April 2014

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Foreword

Dear reader,

In this newsletter, you will have the opportunity to learn about the state of play of the EU Digital Agenda, to **discover DANTE partnership's last achievements** and good practices, and, last but not least, to find out what we are planning for the future.

Enjoy your reading!

DANTE is co-financed by the ERDF and by the INTERREG IVC programme.



DANTE mid-term conference:

How to increase the uptake of ICTs by the tourism industry in rural and mountain areas? 2nd October 2013, Turin (Italy)

DANTE project organised its mid-term conference on Wednesday 2nd October 2013 in Turin (Italy). Our lead partner, Province of Turin, welcomed DANTE partners and tourism operators, coming from all over Europe, to discuss **how to use the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to boost the attractiveness of rural and mountain areas**. The aim of the conference was to present the achievements of the project so far and to collect feedback from participants.

DANTE activities

DANTE involves **13 project partners**, covering a wide geographic area of **10 regions in 8 Member States**. The partnership includes partners with ICT experience at regional level and with knowledge in developing tourism strategy of rural and mountain territories.

During the project, the partners **exchange on their experience** in running regional ICT projects for rural and mountain areas. The transferability of the good practices will be demonstrated in a **pilot action** (in the province of Torino). Based on this work, **in each region, an implementation plan will be developed** to address the local tourism challenges using ICT tools and methodologies.



Tourism is the third largest socio-economic activity in Europe and ICT sector represents 6% of European GDP. These major economic sectors can be combined for the benefit of rural and mountain areas. **“Thanks to the DANTE project, we have done a full screening of the good practices in our region, but also in the territories of our foreign partners”**, explained **Marco Balagna**, Councillor of the Province of Turin and he added that **“To develop tourism, we have now to use all these good practices and to expand these positive results in our territory”**.



Marco Balagna, councillor of Province of Turin

From observations on the ground to regional strategies

Three Italian journalists Silvia Lanza, press agent of Turismo Torino e Provincia, Claudio Cuccurullo, chief editor of "La Sentinella del Canavese" and Alberto Maranetto editor of "L'Eco del Chisone" shared their experiences about the use of Internet and social networks and how easily and quickly tourism operators can reach a large European-wide audience. **“During the Carnival in Ivrea, our website has an average of 4000 daily users, with a huge pic during the event itself”** explained **Claudio Cuccurullo**. A good relation between the organisers of the event and local tourist operators will facilitate the communication and encourage tourism in this area. Tourist operators have several user-friendly tools they could use easily and without spending too much time: a webpage well referenced on major sites like Google, several comments, references or a dedicated page on social media as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram could give a very good image of one tourism operator. In addition, these ICT tools can very easily reach a word-wide audience, larger that the public traditionally reached by press-release or articles in a magazine.



“The use of ICT in tourism can also be developed as a full regional strategy, as the Spanish region of Extremadura has done for twelve years”, explained **Victor Piriz**, Deputy Director of Fundecyt-PCTEX (Extremadura, Spain). He gave an overview of the digital strategy they developed in the region. During several years, this region was one of the poorest one in Spain and had a huge problem with employment. Thus,

twelve years ago, the regional government decided to shift on ICT: every pupil has now a computer to develop children IT skills, the IT infrastructures were developed, the focus was also made on access to broadband, development of open data and open access. They also implement the “ONE”: this policy has the goal that Extremadura become the first region in innovation in Spain, thanks to 5 regional specialisations. One of these specialisations is the quality of life, which includes tourism.

DANTE presented its light pilot to the public

Constantine Manasakis from University of Crete presented an overview of the 34 good practices collected by project partners. These good practices are improving the approach with front office, consumer and back office and can easily be transferred to other regions to boost tourism thanks to ICT.

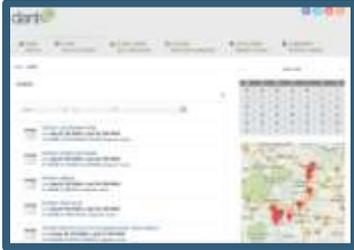
A manual guide was published and some thematic guidelines will be prepared to define opportunities for new innovative tools derived from these practices. In addition, some study visits will be organised

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between DANTE partners to help them to finalise the implementation plan of each partner region, to define its own digital tourism strategy for the following years.



The conference was also the occasion to present for the first time the light pilot which is being developed by CSI Piemonte to reinforce tourism in the mountain areas of the Province of Turin and, beyond, in other regions. A new web platform will gather several innovative modules such as a **Google interactive map and a weather application, an accommodation facilities management system, a community to allow direct interactions between users and exchanges of experiences for both tourists and operators** (see detailed article on the light pilot page 5).

European policies supporting digital and tourism strategies

These local experiences can be supported by several European programmes, such as the ICT and Tourism Initiative, the Digital Agenda or the new programming of EU funds for 2014-2020 (**European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020, COSME...**) as explained by Alexia Rouby, Director of Euromontana, or by the **new INTERREG Europe programme**, as developed by Elena Ferrario, Project Officer of the INTERREG IV C JTS.



Conference participants discussed the policies and opportunities

Building on the results of the project, Elena di Bella, coordinator of the DANTE project (Province of Turin) recommended the tourism operators:

- **To be open:** the tourist is active and can become a blog-journalist and give his/her opinion or send pictures or touristic information to the community
- **To be in the event:** a different language should be developed with a very high sensitivity of the answers to the demand of communication
- **To be close:** to interact with tourists and develop a language more close to emotions, more friendly than before and in real time
- And **to be low cost:** adapt solutions with almost zero costs for the tourism operators.

From the policy point of view, territories should develop three main policies:

- Spread the **“culture of ICT welcome”** by making an easier access to ICT in rural and mountain areas, thanks to trainings, professional users, updating information.
- Create **“Smart and inclusive territories”** by developing the access to broadband, infrastructures, open sources, wireless free access.
- Create a **new system of dialogue for improving the quality of information:** taking into account the users visions thanks to social networks or community networks.

Broadband was **compared with roads or electricity: no territory can do without.** Opportunities associated to ICT development were also analysed, and there rural territories have their full role to play. The need to improve digital literacy – particularly acute in rural areas – and to support businesses was also discussed. Several innovative support schemes were presented.

Wish to know more?

[Have a look on the presentations delivered during this meeting](#)



DANTE Study visits are well on track

Following the collection of Good Practices (please click [here to see the DANTE GP guide](#)), **study visits** have been organized between DANTE partners. It has given the occasion to the visiting partners to learn more about the specificities of the Good Practice of the hosting partner (difficulties encountered, obstacles overcome, how it was funded...). These study visits have given the occasion to discuss about the concrete transferability of these Good Practices and will help to prepare the Implementation Plans of each region. So far, the following study visits occurred.

Cybermassif went to Torino (Italy)

On 28th and 29th October 2013, the Province of Turin and CSI Piemonte hosted a delegation from CyberMassif for a 2-Day study visit in Turin (Italy). The purpose of the meeting was a more in depth analysis of the “**Mobile Tag System**” and “**Net sentiment**” good practices.



Province of Torino and Metropoli (Florence) went to Clermont-Ferrand (France)

On 5th and 6th November 2013, the Province of Turin and Metropoli visited CyberMassif in Clermont-Ferrand and Mende (Massif Central, France). The purpose of the meeting was a more in depth analysis of the “**e-tourism from A to Z**” and “**Cybersudoe**” good practices

A study visit was organised in Bremen (Germany)

Representatives from the Development Centre of the Heart of Slovenia, the Faculty of Economics of the University of Ljubljana and the DANTE project team from the University of Crete and the Decentralized Administration of Crete, Metropoli and Regional Development Agency Bielsko-Biala visited Bremen on 10th December 2013 to learn more about the “**Bauernhofferien**” Good Practice.



4° Study visit of DANTE in Heraklion Crete

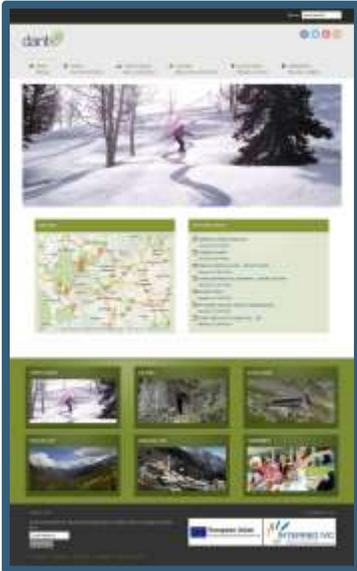


On 12th and 13th February 2014, a study visit took place in Heraklion, Crete. This study visit was jointly organized by the University of Crete and the Decentralized Administration of Crete. Visiting partners were InKnowCom, Fundecyt-PCTEX and Development Center of the Heart of Slovenia. The event focused on 2 main themes: **1. Branding Strategies, Tools and Practices for Rural and Mountain Areas** and **2. Integrated customized tourism experience services in rural and mountain areas.**

For more information, please have a look on the [DANTE news detailing these study visits](#)



DANTE light pilot is already available on line!



The development of the **DANTE pilot prototype** is the result of an analysis of all the good practices collected by the project, trying to identify common elements.

The Light Pilot (available here: <http://demo.danteproject.eu/cms>) collects the selected good practices and applies them to the territory of the Mountain Communities of the Province of Turin. The final result is a **portal software platform** that includes several functionalities and components: **CMS with multi language contents, accommodation facilities management, maps displaying system, newsletter, net sentiment, community for tourists and operators.**

The DANTE light pilot follows guidelines which have been elaborated in cooperation between project partners. The most important are the use of open source software, support of open data policies, creation of a tourism system with an open approach where tourists are encouraged and supported as creators of content that, when shared with other tourists, becomes a stimulus to improve the tourist offer of a territory.

Even though the DANTE Light Pilot platform is presently being tested in the territory of the Province of Turin, project partners may also replicate the installation and test it already in their own territories as well.

DANTE Final Conference: How to reinforce ICT and tourism strategies in rural & mountain areas?

Our project is holding its final conference on **25th June 2014 in Brussels, Belgium**. The aim of this conference is to raise awareness on the opportunities ICTs represent for boosting the attractiveness of rural tourism.

The core part of the event will be dedicated to the communication of the main results from the project. In particular, DANTE will present the **pilot web platform** assembling the functionalities of the good practices identified in partner regions in one operational tool already implemented in the Province of Torino.

Partners believe that ICT and tourism should be addressed as a **dedicated strategy** under their Smart Specialisation Strategy and European funds Programmes. Some DANTE partners regions will discuss their regional strategies.

So come to the conference and have your say!

Visit here [our website](#), the [event page](#) and [register now!](#)

On 24th June in Brussels, don't miss also the opportunity to participate in the final conference of TOURISMLink, an EU funded initiative to improve the connection of SMEs to the global digital value chain through the development of simple, low cost and easy to use ICT solutions. Read more about TOURISMLink and register to the event: <http://www.tourismlink.eu/conference/>



Time to move on to the next programming period: which EU funding opportunities will be available for ICT and tourism?

The new rules for the EU funding schemes for 2014-2020 have just been adopted in December 2013. Which EU funding schemes could help to support further implementation of DANTE strategies, linking ICT and rural tourism during the next 7 years?

Smart Specialisation and the European Structural and Investment Funds



At local level, each region has to define a **Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3)**. This implies to identify unique characteristics and assets, highlighting the region's competitive advantages. The RIS3 aims at strengthening regional innovation systems, maximising knowledge flows and spreading the benefits of innovation throughout the entire regional economy.

This smart specialisation is a pre-condition for the implementation of **ERDF (European Regional Development Fund)** in 2014-2020 (ex-ante conditionality) for enhancing access to and use of quality of ICT. This means that Member States and regions must have Smart Specialisation strategies in place before their Operational Programmes supporting these investments are approved.

This RIS3 strategy should include a “**digital growth section**” stipulating budgeting and prioritization of measures; an analysis concerning the balancing of support for the demand and supply of ICT; measurable targets for the outcomes of actions on digital literacy, e-skills, e-inclusion, e-accessibility and e-health aligned with existing national or regional strategies in those fields; and an assessment of the needs for reinforced ICT capacity-building.

It is up to every region to define how they wish to use these different opportunities to link tourism and ICT in their specific context, depending on their own strategy: the regions have thus a real strategic role to play in defining their smart specialization. DANTE regional plans' implementation will be facilitated by clear reference to tourism and need to foster digital development in relation to tourism in their Smart specialisation Strategies.

Each region has to define its Operational Programme for **ERDF (European Regional Development Fund)**, linking it with the RIS3 and establishing complementarity between the two documents. ERDF can fund small-scale cultural and sustainable tourism infrastructure, and ERDF should enhance access to, and use and quality of, ICT thanks to broadband deployment, high-speed networks, developing ICT products and services, e-commerce, strengthening ICT applications for e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion, e-culture. In most of the regions, ICT will be one of the priorities defined in OP, allowing funding ICT and tourism projects.

In addition, **INTERREG Europe** (the cooperation territorial programme focusing on interregional cooperation) has defined 4 priorities. The first one aims at strengthening research, technological development and innovation and could thus target ICT. Tourism projects exchanging good practices on ICT and implementing them could be financed.

Two other ESIF (European Structural and Investment Funds) could also be very useful:

- The **ESF (European Social Fund)** can encourage the development of e-skills for tourism operators or help to improve the provision of public services using digital technologies.

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- The diversification of rural economy, especially encouraging the development of tourism, can be funded by **EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development)** in rural areas. As EAFRD aims at enhancing the accessibility, use and quality of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in rural areas, this fund could be used to bridge part of the gap between urban and rural regions in terms of digital infrastructure and public services online (even if the low budget availability combined with multiplicity of other goals is likely to constrain this in practice). In particular, for village renewal in rural areas, basic services in broadband infrastructure, provision of access to broadband and public e-government solution and investments for public use in recreational infrastructure, tourist information and small scale tourism infrastructure will be funded. In addition, local action groups can decide to implement such types of measures in the framework of their local development strategy financed through LEADER.

Other funds directly targeting tourism and /or ICT at EU level

Other EU funding schemes are directly managed by the European Commission or its Executive Agencies. Each year (or every two years for Horizon 2020), a work programme will define the annual priorities and will list the calls for proposals that will be published in the following months.

To support EU businesses and entrepreneurs, including in tourism and ICT sector, there will be two main EU funding schemes:

- The new **COSME** programme (Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises): COSME replaces the sub programme Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme of the former CIP (Competitiveness and Innovation Programme). It has the objective to improve framework conditions for the competitiveness and sustainability of EU enterprises, particularly SMEs, including in the tourism sector. This will be done through grants, loan guarantee facility and the equity facility for Growth.



- Young entrepreneurs are encouraged to learn from other European entrepreneurs thanks to the mobility scheme: **Erasmus for young entrepreneurs**. This cross-border exchange programme gives new or aspiring entrepreneurs the chance to learn from experienced entrepreneurs running small businesses in other Participating Countries.

Two other EU funding schemes will be directing targeting ICT:

- The **Connecting Europe Facility** has a budget of €1 billion during 2014-2020 to facilitate the mobility of citizens and businesses by providing seamless cross-border public services such as eProcurement, eHealth, or Open Data. For broadband, the Connecting Europe Facility will only be able to provide seed funding for a limited number of broadband projects, together with the European Investment Bank (EIB).

- The new EU Research programme "**Horizon 2020**" replaces the previous FP7, innovation part of the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) and European Institute of Technology (EIT). It will fund research activities, from fundamental research to close-to-market innovation, for instance, helping innovative enterprise to develop their technological breakthroughs into viable products with real commercial potential. It has a dedicated work programme to fund ICT projects, focusing on how to improve ICT technologies and the future internet thanks to cloud development, improvement of software





Get to know DANTE partners...

METROPOLI



METROPOLI is the Special Agency of the Chamber of Commerce of Florence that supports the start-up, the development and the international expansion of Florentine companies. It was set up in 1991 to support companies in the process of expansion into foreign markets. Over the years though it has become a real Business Development Agency for small and medium size Florentine companies. Moreover METROPOLI represents the Enterprise Europe Network dealing with the sub-theme Tourism. Through its BIC (Business Innovation Centre), METROPOLI represents a territorial point to spread entrepreneurial culture, creates new activities and strengthen the old ones, included the tourism sector.

METROPOLI will contribute mainly to the dissemination of DANTE results through the DG ENTERPRISE network. Moreover, it will contribute to raise awareness on ICT tools, by involving the mountainous territory of the province of Florence. In particular, METROPOLI will develop visibility actions in order to build up a network of relations with DANTE Partners and also in order to create a mountainous touristic system based on innovation.

More information: www.metropoliazienzaspeciale.it

CSI Piemonte



CSI Piemonte is one of the most important Italian actors in the ICT sector. Founded in 1977 upon initiative of the Piedmont Region, University of Turin and Polytechnics of Turin, CSI is today a Consortium of more than 100 public stakeholders. We promote innovation in Public Administration through ICT technologies, providing our stakeholders with simple and efficient services for citizens and businesses. Our databases, IT systems, web services and network infrastructures cover all areas of the public sector: health, production activities, environment, culture, tourism, administrative systems, professional training and employment. CSI-Piemonte is increasingly present at international level and is now acknowledged as a qualified partner in EU funded and international cooperation projects, as well as INTERREG projects, administrative twinning projects, exchange of good practices and training.

In DANTE project CSI Piemonte is particularly involved in the development of the Light Pilot that aggregates the good practices implemented by the partners. The Light Pilot project is presently being tested in the in rural and mountain territory of the Province of Turin.

More information: <http://www.csipiemonte.it/en/>



The DANTE project in short

Dates and figures

13 partners from 8 countries
3 years from January 2012 to December 2014
Final conference: June 2014, Brussels, Belgium

The project will produce

1 Good practices catalogue presenting the good practices analysed
1 Pilot action and **guidelines**
8 Implementation plans for developing information society and tourism

Expected results

Shared and Improved Knowledge regarding how ICT can help the competitiveness of the tourism sector in the participant regions.
Improved Competences and Capacities of the stakeholders in charge of the tourism sector at regional level
Integration of Digital and Tourism Agendas at regional level through the elaboration of 8 regional implementation plans
General improvement of regional policy instruments and better use of Funds.

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Imprint

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- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Province of Turin, IT | 8 Inknowcom, NL |
| 2 Euromontana, BE | 9 Bauernhofferien, DE |
| 3 University of Crete, GR | 10 Development centre of the Heart of Slovenia, SI |
| 4 Decentralised administration of Crete, GR | 11 University of Ljubljana, SI |
| 5 Fundecyt PCTEX, ES | 12 Regional Development Agency Bielsko-Biala, PL |
| 6 CSI Piemonte, IT | 13 Metropoli, IT |
| 7 Cybermassif, FR | |

