

## Newsletter n°5 November 2014

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### Foreword

Dear reader,

This last newsletter is the occasion to present our final achievements before the closure of the project. From the final conference to the last Steering Committee, several promising ways have been discussed to give a follow-up to DANTE project, to continue better integrating ICT and tourism strategies in rural and mountain areas.

Enjoy your reading!

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



### DANTE Final conference:

#### How to reinforce ICT and tourism strategies in rural & mountain areas? Tools and strategies – 25<sup>th</sup> June 2014 - Brussels

DANTE project organised its **final conference on 25th June 2014 at the Committee of the Regions** in Brussels. Seventy people attended the event to learn more about the **project results** (collection of good practices, implementation of a pilot web platform for public administrations, tourism operators and tourists in rural and mountain areas); to see how some regions (Province of Turin – Crete – Extremadura – Cantons du Valais - Kainuun Etu) have developed a **tourism and ICT strategy** and finally to learn more about other **European initiatives** (ICT and tourism strategy / TourismLink) and interesting **EU funding schemes** for the future (INTERREG EUROPE / Structural and Investment Funds).





**Tourism and ICT: a key issue for rural and mountain areas**

Mountain areas cover **29% of the EU territory** and, each year, **95 million long-stay tourists, and 60 million day-trip visitors** visit the Alps. 56% of the EU territory is considered as predominantly rural areas, according to OECD, and **32.2% of the total bed places** are located in these predominantly rural areas. Tourism in rural and mountain areas thus largely contributes to EU growth.

The entire process of developing, managing and marketing tourism products and destinations is under transformation due to the Internet, which empowers the interactivity between tourism enterprises and consumers to unprecedented levels.

ICTs are more and more used by customers to **prepare their travel and book accommodation ahead of their stay, to get practical information through their mobile phone during their stay and to share their impressions on the visited destinations during and after their stay**, thanks to social networks.



**ICTs have a great potential to help rural and mountain destinations promote their specific assets**, as explained Jon-Andreas Kolderup, vice-president of Euromontana.

**European initiatives encourage the combination of ICT and tourism**

The European Commission has taken into account the importance of ICT for tourism. **A new ICT and tourism initiative** has been launched in 2013, as explained Lubomira Hromkova from DG Enterprise. It aims to support employment and growth in the tourism sector, based on:

- a **policy dimension**: with high level working groups
- a **Tourism Business Portal**: launched during the spring 2014, this web portal helps tourism businesses to have all the necessary tools to better run their businesses. It provides examples of business plans, tutorials, explanations on the current legislation.
- a **technological component: Tourismlink**. To date, still 42% of SMEs are not using ICT, Tourismlink aims to improve ICT adoption by tourism SMEs. This online platform connects small travel businesses (such as providers of accommodation, transport and complementary services) with travel agents and tour operators. It offers three main elements: a central reservation system that centralises all products and destinations into one database; a property management system; and channel management, allowing immediate and automatic integration and adaptation of all data, as detailed Paolina Marone, project coordinator of Tourismlink.



INTERREG IVC is the European funding scheme, which co-financed DANTE project. During the capitalisation (in which DANTE participated), **ICT was recognised as one precondition for growth in rural areas**.

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In the new 2014-2020 funding period, the **INTERREG EUROPE programme** will continue to finance tourism projects, eventually with an ICT dimension, as explained Verena Priem from the Joint Technical Secretariat of Interreg IVC. The final aim of this programme will be to improve the implementation of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the regions. Thus, there will be a major involvement of regional managing authorities. It gives some food for thought for DANTE follow-up.



### How to strengthen the practical uptake of interesting practices? DANTE findings on tools

Constantine Manasakis from the University of Crete presented into more details DANTE. This project aims at promoting a **new (knowledge- and ICT-based) regional policy approach for the tourism economy of rural and mountain territories**, and at **unlocking the ICT potential for entrepreneurship** in rural and mountain territories.

To achieve this goals, project partners have identified and analysed good practices. Then they have learnt and exchanged knowledge through workshops and study visits: this gave the opportunity to present the good practices in detail. Lastly, they have disseminated the knowledge gained, interconnecting the DANTE network with the EU policy initiatives running in relevant fields.



#### DANTE light pilot

The Light Pilot (available [here](#)) collects the selected good practices and applies them to the territory of the Mountain Communities of the Province of Turin, as explained Andrea Muraca and Paolo Bruna from CSI Piemonte. 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.**



This DANTE Light Pilot platform was tested in the Province of Turin; the open source code was made available to the other project partners that can replicate the installation and test it in their own territories as well. **Other tourism actors can now have a look at the DANTE light pilot and are invited to implement it in their own territories. If you are interested, please contact us.**

### Roundtable: How to implement a digital strategy integrating rural tourism at regional level?

#### Implementation plans for DANTE partner regions...

Each partner region has defined an **implementation plan**: listing actions and a strategy to develop in its own rural and mountain areas to increase tourism and ICT. All partners have integrated some common recommendations in these implementation plans to **make an easier access to ICT in rural and mountain areas and to create “smart and inclusive territories” for ICT open use.**



### ...written in the European framework of Smart Specialisation Strategies

Generally, these implementation plans are part of a larger tourism and /or ICT strategy in the region, like the **Smart Specialisation Strategy**.

At EU level, Marco Pino from DG Regio gave an overview of the measures already selected by the different regions in their future Operational Programmes, for the implementation of European Structural and Investment Funds. Among them were Development and promotion of tourism assets in SMEs (74 quotes), Development and promotion of public tourism services (93 quotes), ICT High-speed broadband network (>30Mps) (46 quotes), Access to public sector information (79 quotes), ICT services and applications for SMEs (82 quotes). All these measures could represent up to **€10 billion of investments in the following seven years.**



### Concrete examples from regions



**Marco Balagna**, elected representative of Province of Torino, **Maria Kassotaki** from Interim Managing Authority of the Crete Region, and **Victor Piriz**, Deputy Director of Fundecyt-PCTEX for Extremadura, explained their tourism and ICT strategies in these DANTE territories. In addition, **Sarah Hubber**, FDDM for Canton de Valais from Necstour network (Network of European Regions for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism) and **Tuomo Tahvanainen**, Director, Tourism, Creative Industry and Food Sector for Kainuun Etu from ERRIN network (European Regions Research and Innovation Network) gave other European examples of rural and mountain regions.

In almost every region, there are two tourism and ICT strategies: one includes the regional level, that sometimes has already been implemented for a few years, and a new one in the framework of their Smart Specialisation Strategy. These strategies were generally developed at regional level, to better take into account the local specificities of the tourism operators. In rural and mountain areas, one weakness is the **lack of ICT training for tourism operators**. Thus, Province of Turin, Canton du Valais and Kainuue Etu have particularly insisted on that aspect. Others have insisted on the development of **ICT tools for tourism** to help both clients to find the adequate information, and tourism operators to better attract tourists: these are the cases of Extremadura and Crete regions.

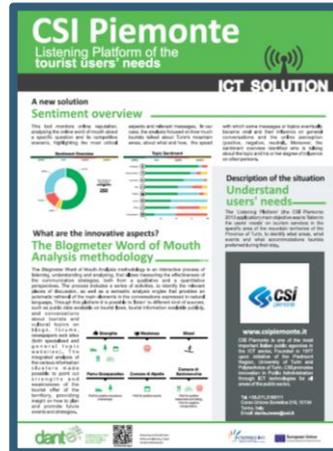
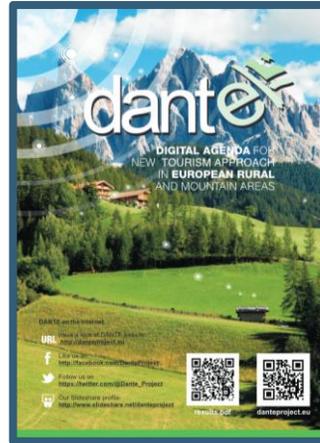
**After 3 years, DANTE project will finish at the end of the year with new tools and strategies to better address tourism and ICT issues in rural and mountain regions. We hope that other regions will use these tools and adapt them to their own specificities.**

**Wish to know more?**  
[Have a look on the presentations delivered during this meeting](#)

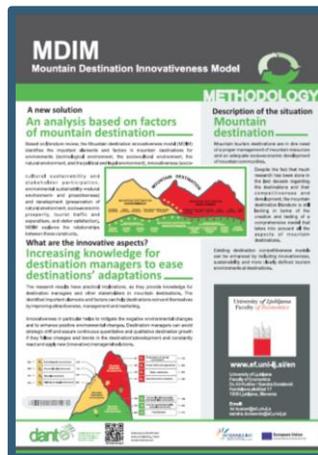


To learn more about DANTE

Discover [DANTE factsheet results](#) and find in just one sheet a summary of all DANTE results with their links to upload them.



Discover also the 6 posters insisting on the innovative aspects of DANTE good practices.





## 6<sup>th</sup> DANTE Steering and Coordination Committee – 23-24 September 2014 – Heraklion – Greece

Following a press conference with the governor of Crete, Mr. S. Arnaoutakis, the Decentralized Administration of Crete and the University of Crete organised a dissemination event to hold an open discussion on development of personalised tourism experience services in rural and mountain areas. It was in particular the occasion for Evgenia Smyrnaki (University of Crete) and her students to show some examples of free /open source software and open data. For instance, on the basis of open data, a student presented an application to calculate the costs of your travel to go from one point to another, analysing the different existing transport possibilities.



On 24<sup>th</sup> September, DANTE partners met for the last Steering Committee. Almost all implementation plans are finalised for the regions and several transfers of good practices have already occurred, such as:

- Cybermassif has implemented the Net Sentiment good Practice of CSI Piemonte
- Bauernhoffereien and InKnowCom have implemented the Light-Pilot open source software and the developed GoodPractice modules from the Dante project into their regions.
- Fundecyt has integrated the Good Practices

“Listening Platform of the tourist users’ needs” from CSI Piemonte and “Archipelago Campano project” (Multimodal transport and tourism services from Crete University) in its implementation plan.

- The Province of Turin is considering the possibility of using and transferring tools and features of the Light Pilot for the development of the project WebGis Trails, web applications for the use and management of the provincial network of footpaths.

DANTE partners also discussed the possible follow-up, once the project will be officially closed at the end of December 2014.

Finally, DANTE partners visited Anogia village to better understand how Crete has dealt with ICT and tourism in one rural and mountain areas. They visited the environmental center and the Anogia museum, as part of the cultural heritage of the region.





## EU funding guides on tourism

Be prepared for the new 2014-2020 programming period and learn more on the different EU funding schemes available for tourism. Discover the [European Commission guide has published a guide](#) and the one of the [Committee of the Regions](#) for local and regional authorities.

### 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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#### DANTE partnership:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 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                           |  |

