Small towns in promotion of their cultural heritage: possibilities and experiences



The project team in Prague has organized the first meeting of the REACH network of associate partners. The event took place on February 15th and was arranged in the format of a **one-day workshop** that was intended to prepare ground for collaboration in the upcoming pilot on small-town heritage. It was visited by a significant number of **twenty partners** from the pilot regions in **Czech Republic, Slovakia** and **Belarus** and a new potential member from **Poland**, a doctoral student of cultural studies from **Wroclaw University**. The program was organized into **four panels**. The first one was devoted to presentation of the project's major objectives and to explanation of the method of critical mapping, SWOT analysis and composition of the database of **best practices in cultural heritage protection**, its re/use and management. The second panel focused on possible forms of **collaboration with associate partners.** What can they offer, and what they expect to achieve from the partnership. The third panel opened discussion about the ways in which the actors operating in **national scale approach** local actors and motivate their activities related to heritage use and re-use. The fourth panel was devoted to the **heritage activities carried out by towns, places and associations.**



The debate was fueled by interesting cases of participatory activities in relation to cultural heritage that were presented on one hand by experts from official institutions such as National Heritage Institute and CzechTourism, and on the other hand by architects operating as volunteers in European Council for the Village and Small Town (ECOVAST) in Slovakia and in Petr Parler Association on one side and local actors from towns represented by partners from Slovak town Svidník, a large factory operating in the town ?eská T?ebová, and a microregional project for participatory activities created by a group of citizens based mainly in small town Sta?e? on the other. The experts operating in NGOs Institute for monuments and culture/ Institut pro památky a kulturu o.p.s. and Anthropictures, Studio antropologického výzkumu /Anthropology research studio represented those who register, survey, motivate and support the participatory activities.
The discussion indicated **several themes for further reflection**, such as: the persisting tendency to limit the idea of heritage in small-town setting to old and tangible monuments; the discrepancies between the values of local residents and the perspectives of protection agencies; the double-edged relations between tourism and local sustainability; or the impact of participation by the local citizenries in all phases of the heritage practices on their success or failure. Very informal and friendly atmosphere, lively discussion

and a **desire to meet soon again** was the feeling generally shared by all participants as well as organizers. It was intellectually very rewarding and pleasant event.

Further information:
Poster of the workshop, programme of the workshop, presentation .