

SECreTOUR

Heritage communities as driver of sustainable tourism

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Heritage and places

- For people living in a territory, it is normal that heritage and places are **linked by history, by traditions, by geography, by the narrations of ancestors**
- However, nowadays, these liaisons **risk being broken** by forms of tourism that are looking at the destinations as mines to be exploited
- The consequences are, among others, turistification, overtourism, gentrification, negative impacts on the natural landscapes



Tourism as a tool



- How to counteract the negative impact of tourism?
- We propose to shift from the simplistic attendance account, to a new concept of tourism as tool to complement and diversify the income of the territories, in the **economic, social, environmental and cultural domains**
- In this light, tourism can become
 - A way of **giving visibility and recognition to rural areas and their inhabitants**
 - A means to promote the installation and the generation of **services that are beneficial both for local communities and for visitors**
 - A valuable contribution to **regeneration and respectful development of the areas**
 - A process of **rediscovery/reactivation of territorial commons** based on shared resources, assets, and spaces typically managed and used collectively by the community

A factor of well-being and social cohesion

Generating innovative fair, creative and sustainable tourism approaches means to explore different ways:

- Meeting together **visitors and local communities**
- Focusing on **culture, nature, knowledge, and experiences**
- Leveraging on strong place attachment of inhabitants to strengthen social cohesion, bolstering the **sense of identity of the rural population**
- Taking advantage of **digital networks** that can allow new categories of workers to relocate at a distance from urban centres
- Valuing and cultivating **heritage elements of the territory**
- Reconnecting with flavours, traditions, craftsmanship and social practices



Heritage Communities

Communities of people who share a strong attachment to a piece of heritage, especially the heritage elements that characterise their territory (Faro Convention, 2005)

Cultural and sustainable tourism projects can represent an essential tool for Heritage Communities' development

However, a shared attachment to heritage should be accompanied by the capacity of the members of the community **to turn the local resources to a proper common, i.e.:**

- Creating forms of **coordination**, between residents, stakeholders and public administration
- Agreeing on the necessary **rules** that allow the management of the heritage to which they are attached



Integrating the participation of local communities into public strategies

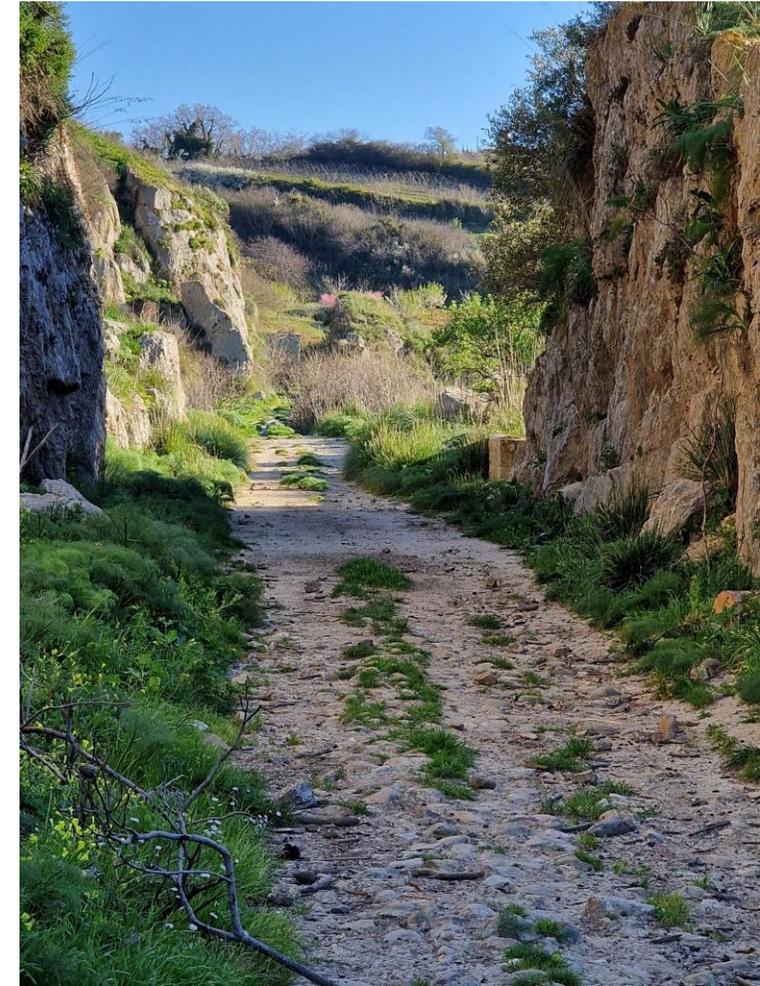
Operational methods are needed for integrating the participation of local communities in political decisions, economic exchanges and territorial planning, such as

- **Payment for services** for the maintenance of heritage resources
- **Liaise tourism with the various economic sectors** of the area: agriculture, forestry, craftsmanship, commerce, ...
- **Re-discovery** of territorial commons
- Inclusion of **minorities**
- Valuing **circular economy**



Tourism in remote areas

- The 21st century tourists are not anonymous tourists, totally alien to the territory, who are taken from one "spot" to another, who buy standardised low-quality products and who are just sucked in by the thirst for new destinations with an ever-higher carbon footprint.
- Despite the remoteness, less-known areas can be particularly attractive for visitors because of their **richness in tangible and intangible, cultural and natural heritage**.
- **Digital services and smart data management** can enhance the accessibility and sustainability of remote and less-known cultural sites.
- Collecting, understanding and using tourism data can enhance the visibility and the attractiveness of remote cultural sites.



Promoting peripheral destinations

Opening up communities to display their unique strengths and local identities to interested visitors may improve confidence, support broader world-views and can produce a **sense of ownership and pride**.

The contents from cultural heritage institutions can offer knowledge on how local identities historically developed through shared and diverging underlying **frameworks of values**.

However, to introduce tourism successfully and in a sustainable way, clear **demonstrators, training programmes, guidelines, awareness actions** are needed, addressing key factors, e.g.:

- Sustainable business models
- Improving the ability to re-use archival resources
- Transforming heritage into stories to be narrated also on the digital platforms



8 cases to experiment innovation

Through these pilots, the project experiments the adoption of **new paradigms in local contexts**, facilitating effective communication and cooperation, and activating co-creative problem-solving through interdisciplinary and trans-sectoral approaches.

- **Bibracte - Morvan des Sommets**
- **Traditional irrigation systems in South-East Spain**
- **The heritage of the Vlach ethnolinguistic minority in the Upper Vjosa valley (Albania)**
- **Rural Roma heritage in Hungary**
- **Historic graves of Ireland and the Irish diaspora**
- **Renaissance of mining-related cultural heritage and heritage communities in central Slovakia**
- **Digital nomadism in heritage-rich communities, Idrija (Slovenia)**
- **San Giorgio, the Threshold of the Sacred Mountain (Switzerland)**

Common approaches for a common vision

- Promoting **networking** and studying **cross-border** opportunities
- Sharing policy lessons and **recommendations**: bio-cultural heritage protection and conservation, environmental care, economic diversifications and community building
- Observing general ideas in local details and in specific governance contexts, testing cooperation and problem-solving through an **interdisciplinary approach**
- Working with a **wide range of stakeholders**, to engage with cultural heritage specialists and managers, farmers, local associations, young people, digital nomads, minorities, neo-rural population and cultural industries
- Integrating citizens and their perspectives into the process, to provide **new pathways to local communities** in facing current and future economic and societal transformations, unlocking the potential of cultural heritage and promoting new forms of cultural tourism

Good practices from the case of Bibracte



Bibracte, Morvan des Sommets is not just being preserved, it's being lived again.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oF8lTdYpyck>

Thank you for your attention

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