



Round table 2: Enhancement of territories through territory marketing and tourism

Organization, animation and reporting: Piedmont Region and the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS)

GOALS

The roundtable aims to underline territory marketing and tourism as tools of local development, namely:

- Theories on local development and their applications in the Balkans area.
- Definition and examples of the use of territory marketing as a tool between communication and economic strategy.
- Implications in the field of tourism, in particular cultural tourism.

PRESENTATIONS

Animator: Marija SOSIC, Program officer, NALAS

Mr. Sergio CONTI, Vice president of the Piedmont Region (Italy)
"Local Development and European Integration"

The topic of the presentation was local development in the light of the European integration. Mr. Conti presented the concept of the local development, identifying two dimensions common to all theoretical approaches: patrimonial (immaterial resources are being used and transformed together with material factors, contributing to initiating or continuing the process of development) and relational (with joint capacities, local actors are collectively defining historical and geographic models of development of specific territory).

In general, local development as the activation of local resources guarantees economic character of territory, by ensuring its economic value and by identifying new resources. Thus, it becomes a technique used at supranational level, in reaching the objectives of international organizations.

At the level of the European Union, the cohesion policy and use of Structural funds are giving strategic guidelines to local development, focusing on several main elements: implication of local actors, construction of governmental networks and conjunction of policies and resources. The need for reinforcing cooperation between institutions and stakeholders at regional and local level, mainly in the fields of innovation, knowledge economy and human capital, is always stressed - yet, these guidelines

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are rather general and the practical role of the European Union often constitutes in simply distributing funds.

As one of the main conclusions, Mr. Conti stressed that public policies should be adapted to territorial characteristics, and not visa-versa (as it is often the case not only in the Balkan region, but also in the countries of the European Union).

Mr. Özgen KESKIN, Mayor of Yildirim / Bursa (Turkey)
"Municipal activities in heritage and cultural tourism"

Mr. Keskin presented the tourist potentials and activities of its municipality: the local development of his municipality is based on heritage and cultural tourism, with special focus on handcraft, food and tradition. The crucial factor in local development is strong involvement of local community in the whole process (both planning and implementation).

Some problems faced by Bursa municipality are the following:

- central government has insufficient communication and interaction with stakeholders, and should transfer competencies from local branches of central and provincial governments to municipalities
- Only local governments contribute financially to implementation of municipal projects in tourism, while the development would be faster and more successful if national government contributes financially, especially in reconstructing and building relevant infrastructure
- Civil stakeholders and private sector should be more actively involved in the process
- Crucial factor for success, that should be improved, is solidarity of local and national level

Mr. Dejan PDOGORSEK, Director of the national Tourist Agency (Slovenia)
"Challenges related to tourism development"

Mr. Podgorsek gave the overview of tourism development in Slovenia and presented some important practical recommendations for successful local tourism development:

- The new concept used in Slovenia that has shown to be efficient is so-called "destination management" approach. It constitutes of identifying local product that can be competitive at global market, and putting it on the shelf of global market. In that sense, it is important to remember that there is no unique model for the whole country/region, because of diversity of territory.
- In planning of tourism development, there are 3 main interests in local areas that should be take into account:
 1. companies are interested in economies exploitation
 2. local governments' interests are focused on protection and development of infrastructure and resources
 3. local residents are interested in improving quality of life and living
- Efficient coordination between different levels of governments in tourism development is crucial, and the division of tasks should be clearly defined, based on the principles of subsidiarity:
 1. national level: promotion/distribution/development
 2. regional level: promotion/distribution/development/operational
 3. local level: promotion/distribution/development/operational

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- In practical terms, when planning tourism development, it should be taken into account that the offer is necessary to provide new experiences and feelings: some of the values that could be offered in the Balkans are hospitality, health and active life and mysteriousness.
- Finally, the local tourism development has to fit in the framework of sustainable local development.

CONCLUSIONS

The Balkan region has evidently big potential for tourism development, mainly of cultural and eco tourism. In that sense, the following principles should be followed and put into practice:

- Create partnerships at all levels: international, national, regional and local:
Local governments should implement partnerships through:
 - development of cross-border cooperation,
 - development of inter-municipal cooperation at national level,
 - following strategic framework defined by national government,
 - as well as by establishing close cooperation with tourist industry
 - wide inclusion of citizens in the whole process
- In order to build and reconstruct necessary infrastructure, significant initial funds are needed. Yet, territorial marketing is as much important, and good ideas and effective promotion is crucial for success. The specific products and services to be offered to costumers have to be defined: in the case of the Balkans, the biggest values to be promoted are hospitality, novelty and diversity.
- The concept of tourism development has to be sustainable and inclusive, and to create synergies between territory, environment and production.