

INTERREG IVC project CHARTS press release No.3

PRESS RELEASE – December 2014

CHARTS project is completed by marking a new era in cultural and heritage tourism development and promotion in the EU and beyond

Project CHARTS, within the EU INTERREG IVC Programme of interregional cooperation, is accomplished fully and successfully by last three events where were presented the main results and key outputs produced by 13 project partners from 11 countries and 9 regions across Europe, including the first Award contest for cultural tourism, that spans well beyond the project`s end.

In order to showcase the achievements, benefits, significant results and outputs produced by CHARTS project partners` regions and destinations, regarding exchange of experience on 12 good practice topics and sustainable tourism solutions, with various presentations and discussions, Partner European Cultural Tourism Network – ECTN hosted **CHARTS Closing Conference “Engaging Culture and Heritage for Sustainable Tourism Development”** on **11 – 12 September 2014 Volos, Greece** in close cooperation with Partners Greek National Tourism Organization, South Pelion Municipality and University of Thessaly.

The Conference was under auspices of the Greek Minister of Culture and Tourism.

The Conference addressed a whole range of relevant issues from the sustainability perspectives, identified specific challenges and examples of relevant actions by CHARTS Partners with invited keynote speakers from EC DG Enterprise and Industry Unit Tourism and Cultural Instruments, INTERREG IVC JTS, NECSTouR, Europa Nostra and external experts, academics and practitioners from Grigol Robakidze University, School of Business and Management (Georgia), Technological Institut Tourism and Management Department in Thessaloniki (Greece), Project SEEMORE of Mallorca Transport Consortium in Spain, company Questlayer (Greece) and organisation CarpatBike (Romania).

The Conference also provided an opportunity to discuss how regions and destinations can initiate and support sustainable tourism development in Europe through engaging culture and heritage (including contemporary culture and natural heritage); what is the contribution of Cultural, Heritage and Sustainable Tourism development in tackling the economic and financial crisis and how Cultural, Heritage and Sustainable Tourism can contribute in the ‘Experience Economy’.

During this Closing Conference there was a ceremony of the 'CHARTS Award 2014' prize for "Destination of Sustainable Cultural Tourism" and the presentation and adoption of CHARTS Charter on "Culture and Heritage Added Value to Regional Policies for Tourism Sustainability".

The Award Commission has decided that with the Award "Destination of Sustainable Cultural Tourism 2014" with the **1st prize** is to be awarded to **cultural route 'Way of Saint James'** in Catalonia, Spain, with the **2nd prize** is to be awarded to **Limbazi city** in Vidzeme region, Latvia and with the **3rd prize** is to be awarded to **Cittadella city** in Veneto region, Italy for their achievements, results and outputs in cultural tourism.

The Conference was combined with pre- and post-Conference study visits in Athens Acropolis and the new Acropolis museum, in the city of Volos, South Pelion and Thessalia region and constituted a major event for Cultural Tourism in Europe with invited keynote speakers.

With the participation of representatives from the European Union institutions, pan-European tourism and cultural bodies and other stakeholders, the CHARTS Project Partnership launched one of the key project output - the **'THESSALIA CHARTER' for 'Culture & Heritage Added-value to Regional policies for Tourism Sustainability'**, on 9 October 2014 in Brussels, during 'Open Days - 12th European Week of Regions and Cities', previously presented, discussed and adopted during the CHARTS Project Closing Conference.

Representatives from the European Commission services (DG Enterprise & Industry, Tourism & Cultural Instruments Unit), the European Economic & Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Parliament services attended the Charter launch event in Brussels, as well as officers from the European Institute of Cultural Routes (CERTESS INTERREG IVC project, Luxembourg) and the European Cyclists Federation.

For the second time, CHARTS Partnership had an exhibition stand at the leading global event for the travel industry - **World Travel Market 2014** tourism fair on 3 – 6 November 2015 in London with partner Greek National Tourism Organization and officially supported WTM World Responsible Tourism Day 2014. During four days Project representatives promoted CHARTS and its results with outputs, established links with other relevant destinations across Europe in cultural tourism, disseminated promotional materials of project and its partners.

The CHARTS project was presented at relevant events, such as **European Tourism Forum**, 30 – 31 Oct 2014 in Naples, **NECSTouR Euromeeting 2014** in Florence and two launch events of new EU programmes - **INTERREG EUROPE** in Bologna and **ENI NextMED** in Rome.

For further information about CHARTS visit www.charts-interreg4c.eu

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Notes to Editors:

1. The CHARTS project started in January 2012. It is a Regional Initiative focusing on the role of culture and heritage in the formulation and delivery of added value to regional strategies for sustainable tourism development and integration into local, regional, national and EU policies. Partners share experience on how improved management of cultural tourism destinations contribute to protection and enhancement of cultural heritage & landscape, as well as sustainable development policies, especially in relation to challenges of climate change and the economic crisis.
2. CHARTS project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and made possible by the INTERREG IVC programme.
3. **Newsletter Issue 1** – December 2012 - <http://www.charts-interreg4c.eu/downloads/newsletters/>
4. **Newsletter Issue 2** – June 2013 - <http://www.charts-interreg4c.eu/downloads/newsletters/>
5. **Newsletter Issue 3** – December 2013 - <http://www.charts-interreg4c.eu/downloads/newsletters/>
6. **Newsletter Issue 4** – June 2014 - <http://www.charts-interreg4c.eu/downloads/newsletters/>
7. **Newsletter Issue 5** – December 2014 - <http://www.charts-interreg4c.eu/downloads/newsletters/>
8. **Press Release No.1** - <http://www.charts-interreg4c.eu/downloads/press-releases/>
9. **Press Release No.2** - <http://www.charts-interreg4c.eu/downloads/press-releases/>
10. **CHARTS Closing Conference** - <http://www.charts-interreg4c.eu/events/closing-conference/>
11. **CHARTS Award 2014** for tourism destinations - <http://www.charts-interreg4c.eu/events/charts-award-2014/>
12. History of the CHARTS project proposal – 12 Good Practices are analysed and exchanged, drawn from two previous networks: the European Cultural Tourism Network (ECTN), legacy of INTERREG IIIC operation, and CHIRON (Cultural, Heritage promotion of Identity of Regions Observatory and Networking for cultural tourism) IIIB CADSES, with Place Marketing delivered by the IIIC CultMark operation and other Initiatives including Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.
13. INTERREG IVC Programme – The Interregional Cooperation Programme INTERREG IVC, financed by the European Union's Regional Development Fund, helps Regions of Europe work together to share experience and good practice in the areas of **innovation, the knowledge economy, the environment and risk prevention**. EUR 302 million is available for project funding but, more than that, a wealth of knowledge and potential solutions are also on hand for regional policy-makers. More information: www.interreg4c.eu.