

MITOMED kick off meeting in Poreč (Croatia)

On September 25th and 26th in Poreč (Croatia), a two-days meeting was organised in the framework of the MITOMED project "Integrated Models of Tourism in the Mediterranean".

6 partners from 4 different countries had a chance to compare their tourist systems and discuss the topic of sustainable and competitive tourism in maritime and coastal destinations.

The MITOMED (Models of Integrated TOURism in the MEDiterranean) project objective is to promote an integrated management model of maritime and coastal (M&C) tourism in the Mediterranean by improving the quantity and quality of data, informations, products, services and policies pertaining to the sector. This will be achieved by using an assessed system of indicators for sustainable tourism developed by the NECSTouR Network - as advocated by COM(2010) 352 "Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination - a new political framework for tourism in Europe", Action 11, while matching the need of the European Union integrated maritime policy.

The MITOMED project "Integrated Models of Tourism in the Mediterranean" is financed by the MED Programme. The project's total budget amounts to € 570,000, of which 443,500.00 € co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

By putting in place a new and relevant partnership of actors and territories sharing similar concerns, the project will develop an holistic approach to the management and development of M&C tourism over inter-regional spaces, monitoring a wide range of natural and anthropic issues pertaining to M&C tourism, which will provide a basis for informed strategic decision-making at the transnational level. The project's system of comprehensive and compatible data will provide a common platform for inter-regional dialogue and comparison, and thereby contribute to improve Mediterranean governance and strategies for the sustainable development of M&C tourism at the sea-basin level.

The first day session - open to the public - was dedicated to the presentation of the project activities and objectives.

The meeting was opened by the Vice President of the Istria Region Viviana Benussi, who welcomed the participants, underlined the importance of the tourism sector in Istria (the region attracts one third of the tourists who come to Croatia). Participants were welcomed also by the Director of the Institute of Agriculture and Tourism, Dr. Dean Ban.

The meeting continued with an interregional workshop, whose aim was to exchange knowledge among the participants and compare the respective tourism systems. The introductory lecture was done by Cristina Vojić Krajcar from Istria Tourist Board, who presented the Istria tourism and the guidelines for its development, and with Prof. Dragan Magaš from the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management in Opatija, which underlined the role of beaches in Croatian Tourism Development Strategy to 2020, an innovative vision.

After that, the partners from Tuscany, Catalonia, Cyprus and Istria presented the results of their preliminary surveys on tourism system.

The second day of the meeting, focused on the project implementation, with the first session of the Steering Committee, was hosted in the beautiful premises of the Institute for Agriculture and Tourism, where the partnership approved the project methodology, discussed the work plan and decided the forthcoming project activities, which will culminate in an European-wide open consultation and the preparation of an Action Plan for maritime and coastal tourism in the Mediterranean. The meeting was closed with the celebration of World Tourism Day. The next project meeting will be in Girona (Spain) in January 2015.

