

# Workshop Alternative tourism: optimizing social and economic benefits

**Location: Vittorio Veneto, Italy, Museo della Battaglia, Piazza Papa Giovanni Paolo I, 1.**

This workshop focuses on the concept of "alternative tourism." You'll explore different approaches like ethical, slow, and creative tourism, which offer ways to rethink local and regional approaches to tourism promotion. Alternative tourism aims to be both socially and economically responsible and contribute to the balanced development of hosting communities.

These strategies not only respond to the challenges of mass tourism —such as its negative impact on destinations, local communities, and the environment. They can also highlight how lesser-known places can showcase their unique offerings and stand out as desirable destinations.

In particular, we will be exploring how tourism can be embedded in local practices, cultures and communities. The objective is to collaboratively explore notions of mainstream and alternative tourism, reflect on their respective positive and negative externalities of tourism, and imagine ways of collaboratively optimising social and economic benefits at the local and regional levels.

The workshop will also go into methods of co-creation and multi-stakeholder collaboration to identify such alternative offers in European regions and showcase some inspiring alternative tourism examples across the Interreg Europe community.

## 20 November

<b>Agenda</b>	
Moderators: Mart Veliste and Erik Gløersen	
08:30-09:00	<b>Registration and welcome coffee</b>
09.00-09.25	<b>Welcome and introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome and introduction to the day – Platform Thematic experts</li> <li>Welcome from the Municipality of Vittorio Veneto – Mirella Balliana, Mayor of Vittorio Veneto (<i>tbc</i>)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome and presentation of the Interreg Europe programme - Interreg Europe JS Team - Magda Anagnostou, Coordinator - Policy Learning Platform, Interreg Europe</li> <li>• Thematic introduction: overview of EU policies and Interreg Europe projects on the topic of alternative tourism – Platform Thematic experts</li> </ul>
	<b><u>Setting the scene</u></b>
09.25-09.45	<p><b>The social and economic benefits of a sustainable tourism strategy: the case of Vittorio Veneto</b></p> <p>Jumana El Tabch, Municipality of Vittorio Veneto Alberto Ferri, project consultant on Local Flavours</p> <p><i>The presentation will focus on the tourism context of Vittorio Veneto and on how the Local Flavours project has influenced its policy.</i></p> <p><i>Vittorio Veneto was part of the Local Flavours project that span from 2019 to 2023. During the time they improved three policy instruments: 1) ERDF Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020, Axis 3 Competivity of Productive Systems; 2) Operational Programme European Social Fund (ESF) 2014-2020 of Veneto Region and 3) Strategic Recommendation for Tourism Development of Vittorio Veneto 2021-2027. Regarding the latter, prior to the project, a comprehensive and coherent multiannual planning in the tourism sector in Vittorio Veneto had never existed and the great number of initiatives in cultural and touristic sectors were “not connected” and not included in an overall strategic plan.</i></p>
	<b><u>Defining alternative tourism</u></b>
9.45-10.25	<p><b>Keynote presentations: notions of ‘alternative tourism’ and ‘creative tourism’</b></p> <p><i>The academic perspective on the topic would inspire the participants and contribute to enriching the exchanges foreseen in the following sessions.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Prof. Elena dell’Agnese, Professor at Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca.</i></li> <li>• <i>Prof. Greg Richards, Professor of Placemaking and Events at Breda University of Applied Sciences and Professor of Leisure Studies at the University of Tilburg in The Netherlands, on “<b>Creative tourism: Harnessing the qualities of place</b>”</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Creative tourism is an alternative to conventional models of cultural tourism, and represents a more active relationship between places, creative resources and visitors. This requires a more holistic approach to tourism development that is place-based, and which is supported by a creative form of placemaking. This concept is currently being developed by the CROCUS Project (Cultural and Creative Tourism in Rural and Remote Areas).</i></p> <p><i>Greg Richards is Professor of Placemaking and Events at Breda University of Applied Sciences and Professor of Leisure Studies at the University of Tilburg in The Netherlands. He has worked on projects for numerous national governments, national tourism organisations and municipalities, and he has extensive experience in tourism research and education, with previous posts in the UK and Spain. His current research interests centre on the creative use of space for cultural, social and economic development. He is participating the EU CROCUS Project (Cultural and Creative Tourism in Rural and Remote Areas).</i></p>

	<i>15 minutes for presentation, 5 minutes for questions</i>
10.25-10.45	<b>Coffee Break</b>
10.45-12.20	<b>Group work: ‘Alternative’ and ‘creative tourism’ as levers of economic and social development</b>
	<b><u>Exploring co-creation methodologies</u></b>
12:20-13:00	<p>The objective of this session is to present practices and policies from Interreg Europe projects on elaborating tourism offers with co-creation methods that allow for a better ownership and governance of the tourism offer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Legends of Āraiši - storytelling and community based creative tourism</b>, Eva Koljera, Head of Āraiši Ezerpils Archaeological Park and Tourism Department, Latvia (Cult-CreaTE)</li> </ul> <p><i>Storytelling is a big part of traditional culture in Latvia. Āraiši is a small scenic place with concentration of many ancient legends. The most important tourism site is The Archaeological Park with reconstructed Lake settlement from 9-10th century which was discovered partially due local legends about sunk castle. The Legends of Āraiši is based on public private collaboration and gives chance to involve local businesses – as storytellers/guides, craftsmen, musicians, caterers, food and souvenir makers and accommodation providers. Thanks to the joint branding of the region there has been an increase in visitors, services and local entrepreneurship. Due to the small size of the region each new service or SME in the tourism sector can increase the touristic offer in the region. Therefore, it is highly dependent on community cooperation and joint marketing efforts. It is also a good practice of keeping alive cultural heritage through story telling.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>“The sky is not the limit: Astrotourism in the Coimbra Region”</b> Zília Tovar, Officer at Economic Development Unit, CIM-Region de Coimbra, Portugal (Tourism4SDG)</li> </ul> <p>In the interior of the Coimbra region, the absence of economic activity over time and the sparsity of the population have resulted in less light pollution. Also, its rugged terrain forms a natural barrier that protects these remote places from the light pollution of the coast and its main cities. This apparent weakness has made it possible to distinguish the sky and the territory with the “starlight tourism destination” certification.</p> <p>The dark sky has been transformed into a tourist asset, making it possible to develop a range of activities that go beyond mere observation of the sky to become a strategic commitment that reconciles tourism development with social and environmental sustainability, thus transforming an apparent weakness of the territory into a distinctive asset of economic and cultural value. This transformation has happened in a multistakeholder framework through collaboration among local authorities, civil society, and private stakeholders, integrating the diverse perspectives in the design and development of the tourism product, services and experience.</p>
13.00-14.20	<b>Lunch Break</b>
	<b><u>Exploring co-creation methodologies [continues]</u></b>
14:20-	Group work building on these presentations

15:00	Compilation of main findings from groups
	<b>Food and sports: promising testing grounds for alternative tourism approaches</b>
15.00-15.30	<p>The objective of this session is to present concrete practices and policies from the Interreg Europe project community as inspiration for alternative tourism offers.</p> <p>Presentations by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Local Gastro (Local Gastronomic Points)</b>, Dorian Lungu, The Gastro Local Association, Romania (TIB project)</li> </ul> <p><i>GASTRO LOCAL is a nationwide network type program based exclusively on the establishment of Local Gastronomic Points. Started in 2019, it emerged from the need of offering tourists from Vama Buzăului Commune - Braşov Metropolitan Area, a real, safe, unique culinary experience in the countryside. Local Gastro has the role of offering visitors the opportunity to serve a meal with traditional Romanian products at local households, in the area where they spend their vacation, in a rustic atmosphere, but in compliance with the hygienic standards imposed by law. The concept supports and really encourages local producers in the countryside.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tour de Fruška</b>, Ivan Arpaš, director of the event, and Igor Vapenski, the project manager, Vojvodina, Serbia</li> </ul> <p><i>Tour de Fruška is a three-day event designed for all cycling enthusiasts, recreational activities, nature lovers, good music, and Vojvodina's gastronomic specialties. It takes place on Fruška Gora known for its beautiful landscapes and rich cultural and historical heritage. It is organized in the form of challenging bicycle races through the untouched nature of the Fruška gora National Park, with paths that stretch through forest roads, hilly areas and traditional Vojvodina villages. In addition to providing a sporting challenge, participants have the opportunity to enjoy natural beauty, peace and clean air, making this event a unique experience. Also, the event includes various additional activities, such as hiking, tasting of local products, cultural programs and workshops, making it ideal for visitors of all ages. The aim of the event is to raise awareness of the importance and protection of Fruška Gora, while promoting the tourist, cultural and economic potential of this region.</i></p>
15.30-16.00	<b>Wrap-up</b>
16.00-18.00	<p><b>Study visit, cooking class and networking cocktail</b></p> <p>This special experience, organized by Terra Fertile, will give you the opportunity to explore the rich cultural heritage of Vittorio Veneto. Terra Fertile is a cooperative dedicated to sustainable agriculture, local traditions, and the promotion of rural communities. Their work focuses on enhancing the local environment through projects that connect people to the land, nature, and cultural history.</p> <p>The study visit includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A guided tour of the Museo del Baco da Seta, where you'll learn about the history of silk production in the region and its lasting impact on the local economy and culture.</li> <li>• A cooking class where you'll learn to prepare traditional dishes like radicchio e fagioli and pinza, celebrating the flavors of the local area.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A light, informal dinner featuring cheese tasting led by the ONAF (National Organization of Cheese Tasters), paired with traditional meat skewers prepared by the local restaurant “Bepo al Larin.” The evening will be rounded off with a selection of local wines from nearby wineries.</li> </ul>
20.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>End of Workshop</b></li> </ul>
	<b>21 November</b>
09.00-13.00	<b>Matchmaking meetings</b>
09.00-12.30	<p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> Study visit (optional)</b></p> <p>The program includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A visit to Sarmede, Il Paese della Fiaba (The Land of Fairy Tales). Home to the Zavřel Foundation, Sarmede is internationally recognized for its dedication to the art of illustration and storytelling. As part of the Interreg Europe Local Flavor Project, this good practice highlights how culture and tourism can be intertwined to foster community development. You’ll explore Sarmede’s charming murals and its International School of Illustration, discovering how the village has become a hub of artistic creativity and cultural tourism.</li> </ul> <p>A visit to the Torchiato di Fregona winery, where you’ll learn about the traditional production of Torchiato di Fregona, a prestigious sweet wine made from dried grapes grown in the surrounding hills. This exclusive wine is a symbol of local agricultural heritage, and you’ll have the opportunity to taste it and delve into the meticulous winemaking process that has been passed down through generations.</p>