



# NEWSLETTER

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## FINAL EVENT OF DISCOVER55 SENIOR TOURISM

### PROJECT IN SAVONLINNA

On June 8th 2017 the final event of DiscOver55 was held at the Spahotel Casino in Savonlinna, Finland.

During the morning session, targeted at representatives of local senior associations, Pellervo Kokkonen, national coordinator for Finland (tour operator Savonlinnan Matkatoimisto Oy) introduced DiscOver55 project and its results. Project's general coordinator and representatives from each partner country presented the other three DiscOver55 destinations: Izola, Monte Pisano and Vulkanland, illustrating the products produced and the lessons learnt during the project's activities.

In the afternoon, a specific workshop on Lake Saimaa senior tourism product involved local tourism service providers and developers, to explore the potential of senior tourism in Lake Saimaa, reaching out to new customer segments, increasing tourism in off-season period and prolonging the tourist seasons. The participants analyzed the experience of the Italian group during Pilot tests, in which 14 senior tourists visited Lake Saimaa and tested local activities, and examined the pilot test results and recommendations, confronting with the project's experts from Finland, Italy and Austria.



## SILVER TOURISM CONFERENCE IN POLAND

The conference “Silver Tourism” took place in Darlowo, northern Poland on 6/7 May 2017, organized by Darlot local tourist consortium, PROAge and University of Lodz. Many participants – representatives of tourist agencies, boards and service providers from many town and resorts from Poland – took part at this conference, as well as EURAG (European Federation of Older Persons) representatives, as international guests.

EURAG is a non-profit and non-religious European organisation independent of any political parties. Its purpose is to promote the quality of life of older persons in society, at all social and political levels. EURAG especially promotes the co-ordination, collaboration and exchange of opinions by its members with expert and service organisations, self-help groups as well as with individuals possessing special expertise.

DiscOver55 project and COSME programme was presented by Alenka Ogrin from ZDUS, Slovenia, also a member of EURAG. The audience was particularly interested in the recommendations from the evaluation report and presentation of tourist packages for seniors, adapted for the low season.



## SOME EXTRACTS FROM DISCOVER55 HANDBOOK

### *Lessons learnt and recommendations for devising a senior tourism product*

The handbook was drafted under the supervision of the project partner and senior organization GEFAS STEIERMARK based in Graz, Austria. GEFAS is a non-profit organization founded in 1991 that raises awareness and spreads information about active ageing for an enjoyable quality of life. GEFAS answers elderly people's needs and wishes, promoting various social initiatives and projects related to: lifelong learning, active citizenship, gender empowerment, sports and health and inter-generationality. GEFAS, by working with both institutions and the target group, effectively mediates between seniors' concerns and policies affecting seniors' quality of life.

### *Findings*

#### **General Information about Senior Testers**

The average age of the participants was 68.2 years. This is a relatively old group compared to previous studies funded by the EU. In the project ESCAPE<sup>[1]</sup>, where 900 seniors participated in a survey, the majority was between 55 and 65 years old. The age group that was chosen for our pilot test is an important one, because at around the age of 70 on average travelling becomes a little bit challenging and package providers have to know about the needs of this target group.

The group was very used to travelling abroad. Only 6 out of 56 participants did not travel abroad every year and the average number of journeys abroad within the last three years was 5.6.

#### **Preferences and Priorities for Seniors on Journey**

Since seniors rate themselves as very communicative, most interested in nature and historic sites and that they are very open to getting to know something new, it is not surprising that they said that the most important reason for choosing a particular type of trip is the opportunity to learn something about the country, the people and the customs. They have a strong expectation that the trip will broaden their horizon and give them new impressions. Other points they rate as very interesting are sightseeing/educational travel and countryside/natural attractions. Asked about the accompanying program, they prefer visits to museums. Corresponding to their high interest in communication, they like

activities like singing and dancing and above all, they rate communication in different languages as being very important.

In respect to particular needs of seniors, it is noticeable that in the initial questionnaire the wish to go on a journey specifically tailored for seniors is rather small. Also, the questions concerning flexibility in planning, importance of medical care at the travel destination and need for help with luggage the answers draw a very self-confident picture of the testers. A well organized arrival at the destination and frequent breaks during the program though are important to them.

The handbook is downloadable in 5 languages from DiscOver55 website [www.discover55.eu](http://www.discover55.eu)

[1] ESCAPE – European Senior Citizens’ Actions to Promote Exchange in tourism, [http://www.escape2europe.eu/sites/default/files/ESCAPE\\_Deliv6\\_ReportNeedsInterests.pdf](http://www.escape2europe.eu/sites/default/files/ESCAPE_Deliv6_ReportNeedsInterests.pdf), (2017-04-10)

## FINAL EVENT IN MONTE PISANO

Friday 23rd June at the Villa Medicea of Buti (Pisa), took place the final event of the project “DiscOver55 – Tourism Destinations Crossover”, organized by Timesis srl – Montepisano DMC in collaboration with the Municipality of Capannori.

The purpose of the day was to present the results of the project which aims to promote and to commercialize some tourist products made for senior citizens (over 55). The areas involved in the project are four: Lake Saimaa, Finland; Izola, Slovenia; Vulkanland, Austria and Mount Pisano in Italy and its seven municipalities (Buti, Vicopisano, Vecchiano, San Giuliano T., Pisa, Lucca, Capannori).

The main protagonists of the event were tourism enterprises of the area, local authorities and local and regional stakeholders including senior organizations such as AUSER.

After the institutional salute of Mayor of the Municipality of Buti and of Luca Menesini, Head of the Coordinating Table Monte Pisano and Mayor of the Municipality of Capannori, intervened the regional tourism manager Stefano Romagnoli to present the trends and future policies for sustainable tourism in Tuscany.

The results of the pilot tests were presented by Monia D’amico, coordinator of the project,

and an analysis of the results of the evaluation mission on Monte Pisano and the indicators used (ETIS) has been made by Sara Levi Sacerdotti and Carlotta Guaragna of SiTI – Institute for Territorial Systems for Innovation.

The AUSER association, presented the collected testimonies of senior who tested the packages realized by the project DiscOver55 in Europe, the packages were presented to the public by the network manager Montepisano in Tuscany, Raffaella Nocchi, who contributed to their realization.

Finally, Riccardo Marzi of the Municipality of Capannori and responsible for DiscOver55 project communication, talked about tools for effective communication of the sustainability of the Montepisano area.

