

conference report

6. TourMIS user workshop and an international seminar: "Demographic changes and tourism"

TourMIS workshop and an international seminar "Demographic changes and tourism" were held on the premises of the University of MODUL Vienna, from September 16 to 17, 2010. The two day event was organized by the European Travel Commission (ETC), UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), European Cities Marketing (ECM) and MODUL University Vienna. The event was sponsored by the Austrian National Tourist Office (ANTO) and the Vienna Tourism Board (VTB). Participants were mostly employees of tourist organizations, from national to local, but there were also those from private corporations and academic institutions. According to the registry, the event was visited by more than a 100 participants from 30 European countries.

The workshop for users of the Marketing Informational System TourMIS is organized with the intention of having existing users trade information and experiences acquired through past usage, as well as the opportunity to acquire new possibilities of practice.

TourMIS has been on the market since 1984 and at the beginning its content was meant for Austrian Touristic Regions, or ANTO. In the period of 1999-2000 the system became a platform for transmitting statistical information between European Cities Tourism, or ECM (ECT/ ECM) and ETC, which is also when it became publicly available. The content of the system is continuously updated, so that, except, the basic tourism statistics, (arrivals and overnights according to country of origin and type of accommodation), it includes information

about visitors of attractions in Austrian tourist destinations. The team, lead by Professor Dr. Karl W. Wöber has, while developing the system, given a significant contribution to unification of national definitions and methodologies according to which certain countries collect information in tourism. Every user of the system can become familiar with these national methodology principles.

TourMIS is a winner in 2009 of the Jury Prize award, which is rewarded every year by UNWTO Ulysses Committee for innovation among tourism enterprises. With the newest development plans for TourMIS, the users of city statistics will be able to ensure a comparison of seasonality, prices (ECM city break shopping), and cultural demand. Currently the system is developing modules for forecasting tourism flows as well.

The participants of the sixth workshop were introduced to the publication: "European Cities Marketing Benchmarking Report" which began circulating in 2004 on the basis of information from TourMIS. The publishing was initiated by a group of European cities so that managers of city tourist destinations would have a better picture about the strategic and competitive position of the Member of ECM.

The International seminar of Demographic Changes and Tourism had, in its first part, presented the most important analysis of ETC-UNWTO study: "Demographic Change and Tourism" as well as an introduction to global demographic changes published by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis.

According to research of ETC-UNWTO there are four main trends that will most significantly affect tourism:

- Aging population of developed countries will result in larger numbers of older tourists
- Families that include several generations will look for proposals that satisfy the needs of its youngest to oldest members
- The number of people leaving alone will also increase, so the destinations will have to accommodate them as well
- Because of increased migration of the population (due to economic, professional, educational and other reasons) the number of "tourist-migrates" will also grow, and they will require more specific experiences when travelling to their home countries.

The workshop organized within the framework of this seminar had the intention for regional teams (participants from Mediterranean countries, Scandinavian countries etc) to discuss the new tourism products that need to be developed by their destinations to respond to the new demand. More accurately, the workshop wanted the participants to consider the modifications needed to existing destination offers, and to in compliance with them, suggest promotional and marketing measures needed.

In the afternoon part of that seminar, the participants were introduced to examples that spoke about the experiences of those that are actively involved and are acting in accordance to the new market segments. In Austria, an association of "50plus Hotels Österreich" already consists of around 100 hotels from Austria

and Germany. In those hotels there are special quality control measures employed for the goods and services offered to those generations "50plus" which not only have extensive life experience, but extensive travel experience as well. The hotels that satisfy the quality control measures are in turn awarded a "RAL-Gütezeichen 50plus Hotels" sign. The example from Western Sweden talks about a public-private collaboration initiated by the aging population, changes in behavioural patterns, as well as loss of interest by younger populations to visit the region.

The result of that collaboration is an agreement about new spatial planning, as a pre-requisite for a number of interventions in the space (new marinas, ports, parking lots, etc.), as well as the development of new tourism products for said market segments (DINKS, WHOPS and active families). Further, Ulf Sonntag (N.I.T. – Reiseanalyse) has, using research results of Reiseanalyse presented key aspects of marketing to Germans in their best years, which was also something Simon Hudson from University of North Carolina explored. British agency "Poppy Travel-ETOA" which offers travel to historic destinations important to citizens of United Kingdom that are outside of their own territory, has also adapted their offer to reflect the needs of older populations travelling, or those travel groups of varying ages.

The sixth workshop for users of TourMIS and the seminar of Demographical Changes and Tourism were not only impeccably organized, but also offered a deeper overview of selected topics, which is always ranked high with participants, as they believe their time is best used in this way.

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