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This project is funded by the European Union.

Study Visit

'Italy-Greece-Turkey on Foot'

Date: 27 May – 1 June 2019

Place, venue: Apulia regions : Monte Sant'Angelo, San Giovanni Rotondo, Polignano a Mare, Monopoli, Bari.

Objectives: showcase of best practices of the Apulia region in terms of pilgrims' hospitality and routes development.

Participants:

- Hüseyin Eryurt, Culture Routes Society
- Serdar Fabrice Uzun, Culture Routes Society
- Onat Berhat Alan, Culture Routes Society
- Gözde Sarıcan, Edirne Municipality
- Şevket Verit, Izmit Municipality
- Eirini K. Yalçın, Bursa Municipality
- Max Smit, Sultan's Trail
- Furkan Yavuz, Tolerance Way
- Theodoros Trachanidis, Trace Your Eco, Greece
- Massimo Tedeschi, EAVF
- Luca Bruschi, EAVF
- Elena Dubinina, EAVF

Activities:

- **Meetings:** with associations of Monte Sant'Angelo, the mayor and vice-mayor in charge of tourism in Monte Sant'Angelo, meeting with the representatives of the Apulia Regions (Anna Introna and Angelo Fabio Attolico).
- **Hikes:** in Gargano National park and between Polignano a Mare and Monopoli.
- **Cultural Activities:** degustation of Monte Sant'Angelo bread, visit to the St Michael the Archangel Sanctuary, Sanctuary of St Padre Pio, Church of St Nicolas, guided tour of Monte Sant'Angelo and Bari.





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Debriefing meeting points and suggestions:

- Max Smit: Sultan's trail and Via Egnatia don't aspire voting at the moment, that is why we could try to imagine an alternative way of their membership (such as 'Via Eurasia Friends').
- Theodoros: the process of establishing a route on the ground level and then grow up is different from establishing an international association from scratch.
- How do we represent? Max suggested the association to be represented by the routes.
- Eirini has some contacts from Greece about engineering and would try to connect us.
- Hu: where does VEU start and finish – in Rome or Bari? After the discussion we decided that it ends in Rome. (to be discussed with Stefano Dominioni).
- Traveller – someone who loves walking and enjoys adventures and walks along the specific cultural heritage – is our target audience.
It is better to avoid a 'pilgrim' definition, cause the future route has 3 major religions along the route and it is reasonable to avoid any potential difficulties of inter-religious dialogue.
- Max proposed to avoid the word road and change it into a route. He also suggested to add 'use of routes' in the theme.
- A suggestion to theme justification: 'Walking in historical environment of 3 empires is amazing, it is exciting to walk in the context of historical geography'.
- Our very special element is to connect rural areas together.

Participants' feedback on the study visit:

- Overall very positive feedback of the study visit;
- Participants learnt about the country, its culture and traditions.
- They really enjoyed the guided tours, different guides which we had gave lots of added values and were very interesting.
- They learnt the standards of the VF and local hospitality practices, services and their structure in the region;





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- Impressed by the services, hospitality, content of rural tourism, as well as the routes – the quality of paths as they were all very well marked;
- They learnt a deeper understanding of the CoE CR structures;
- Some participants expressed interest in participating in the VEU to learn best practices and nomination procedures for the CoE CR;
- Representatives of municipalities will pass the knowledge to their teams and superiors;
- Theodoros especially liked the combination of hiking and local culture in our programme. He enjoyed the discussions with management and looking for benefits of CR – helping rural areas and villages, everything which is in between the big cities, that is the key point of a CR.
- Interesting to learn if there are tourist products about cultural routes – Theodoros is interested in having a package.
- It would be interesting to replicate this study visit in Turkey

Observations and notes for future actions:

- Interpretation and translation are very important;
- Guided tours were very appreciated and are of crucial importance;
- It is vital to organise a debriefing with plenty of time for discussion and debates;
- Free time for participants should always be dedicated;
- Human contact is significant. When the participants of a meeting could join us for a hike and a dinner, it was very much appreciated.

Photo gallery: <https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=1-OBjE2CQzfq-KXOw4zw1bwVfWjhZWq8F>

