

Interpretation of gastronomic traditions of cultural heritage to enhance tourism in rural areas

VALERIE ISABEL ELSS M.Sc.⁴

This article presents a current EU project on the interpretation of European cultural heritage in the context of tourism. In Europe there are about 453 cultural heritage sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List (BMNT, 2018). Europe's cultural heritage is highly diverse. This is by no means limited to museums, theatres or castles; tradition and customs are also part of Europe's cultural heritage. As an essential part of the collective European memory it is essential to preserve this diversity.

From an economic perspective, the preservation of cultural heritage is a crucial task for the future. Within the EU, more than 300,000 people work in the cultural heritage sector; in addition, there are about 7.8 million jobs in the EU that correlate indirectly with cultural heritage (e.g. tourism; CHCfE Consortium, 2015).

How could tourism be used to make European cultural heritage more "attractive"? And how can European cultural heritage be used to promote tourism in rural areas in particular?

⁴ University of Applied Sciences (FHM) (Germany).

EU-Project "MIECAT": Project objectives, methods and tasks -

In a 3-year Erasmus+-funded research project (MIECAT methodology for the interpretation of European cultural heritage through attractions in tourism), six European universities are developing a study module (University of Applied Science FHM Schwerin, the University of Economics in Prague, the University of Economics in Bratislava, the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, the University of Applied Sciences Burgenland and the Universidad Europea de Madrid). The module is intended to prepare students of tourism study programmes for the task of imparting knowledge about cultural heritage to tourists in order to support its continuance, but also to make use of cultural heritage in order to sustainably promote the development of tourism, including rural destinations.

The sustainability of the project is ensured by means of three project results:

1. Syllabus
2. e-book (European cultural heritage, i.e. gastronomic traditions the methods of its interpretation and transfer strategies for tourist markets)
3. guideline for tourism companies with a focus on the conception and implementation of tourist attractions (best practice approaches, analysis of tourist needs, market segmentation and event management)

Gastronomic traditions and sustainable tourism development

in rural areas - Gastronomy is an integral part of tourist manifestations. For example, Pulido-Fernández, Cárdenas-García and Carrillo-Hidalgo (2016) were able to show that gastronomic activities account for 12.7% of the most important activities in the destination. Gastronomy and its traditions are one of several mirrors that reflect a community's way of life and belief systems.

Gastronomic traditions should be understood as methods of preparation, vessels for preparation, seating, social rites for eating, cultural taboos for food (which can be regarded as indicators of ideology) and basic belief systems of the respective culture.

It is precisely through the transfer of knowledge and experience of gastronomic traditions that these can be kept alive, and there is also potential to promote tourism development, especially in rural areas.

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