On February 4, 2021 the partnership of the Digital Tourism project organised a virtual event titled “Digital Tourism: Current and Future Skills”. The event was hosted online by EfVET, one of the partners responsible for the dissemination, among the others WP.

The digital development for tourism industry has become essential to gain competitive advantages and to shape their offer on the needs of the target audience. That’s why the KA3 DIGITAL TOURISM project was born.

The 21st century and technological evolution leads us to “digital experiences” and to a more demanding consumer with an enormous capacity for evaluation. This evolution proposes new challenges to maintain quality and keep different in a very competitive sector - Tourism. Considering this changes and challenges it was necessary to develop a new profile: DIGITAL TOURISM INTERMEDIATE PROFESSIONAL.

The partnership worked on developing this new job profile with the Digital Tourism Technician qualification. The course, with target group 15-to 19-year-old students, 3-year duration and Level of Qualification IV – V (depending on the
countries), consists of 3 Learning Units: Tourism, Marketing, and IT in Tourism and it is studied to create, develop, promote and sell online products related to Tourism. It also foresees a long term WBL in international companies.

The moderator Ms Marijo Moreno, from the partner CEBANC welcomed the participants and introduced the speakers. Having worked in international cooperation projects for several years, as coordinator of Insignare’s office dedicated to this area, Mr Sérgio Fernandes presented the project Digital Tourism more in details.

Ms Elisabete Marques, who in addition to the role of Teacher & Trainer, is also a Technical Supervisor at Fatima Hospitality School (part of Insignare), presented “Digital Tourism VET Design Project” and the detailed the Digital Tourism Technician qualification.

Mr Pieter van Schie, Director of Dutch Foundation of Innovation Welfare2 Work followed with his presentation on “Skills & Methodology WBL Assessment”. WBL is an effective teaching approach used to engage students in real-life occupational Digital Tourism experiences. It incorporates structured, work-based learning activities into the curriculum, allowing a student to apply knowledge and skills learned in class and connect these learning experiences in the workplace. He stressed the importance of carrying out an assessment of the students: they can be selected on certain soft and hard skills (technical and knowledge), attitudes and behaviour. Such assessment, and the steps from Recruitment to Selection to Placement were described, as well as the Placement and Orientation Checklist were described more in details.

Insignare contributed to the event also with a Good practice “Carmelite Route”, presented by Ms Carina João Oliveira - CEO of Insignare & EfVET Secretary to the Board - through a video which can be found at this link. Students from Insignare choose this Route and went to study it. Thanks to this study, they collected elements, stories, data, photos... Thanks to a planning, the activity of research, thinking, creativity was possible in the classes: students started using what they found along the route for their VET courses of Cooking, Pastry, Bar, Tourism. For example, they made tasky pastries of pumpkin. The route was then completed with new products, digital content, information, tradition and values. An event was organised and students of Digital Tourism also worked on the digitalization of the content: this is the future!

Ms Anna Barbieri, EU DG-Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion (Unit E3 for VET, Apprenticeships & adult learning) presented “The New Skills Agenda and the Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience”. Among the recommendations she stressed out the importance to:

- Equip young people and adults with the skills to manage the recovery and the just transitions to the green and digital economy, and to thriving in the evolving labour market cycles
- Promote European vocational education and training systems in an international context so that they are recognised as a worldwide reference of excellence
- Foster inclusiveness and equal opportunities and contribute to achieving resilience, social fairness and prosperity

The last speaker was Mr. Afonso Carreira, Business Development Manager at Verde Pino Travel Agency based in Fatima, Portugal. With his presentation “Digital Promotion in the Hospitality Industry”, he described the Consumer Decision Journey, the Tourism Distribution Channels, and Promotion in the travel industry. He also stressed out the importance of the Digital marketing and the Covid-19 acceleration of it.

We would like to thank once again all the speakers and the participants for their active participation and engagement during the webinar.
ITE SCARPELLINI - Digital Tourism Pilot course: “Web Marketing Accelerator” training course, by ITE SCARPELLINI

Watch the informative video of the Expert (IT) at this link!

As part of the Erasmus+ KA3 Digital Tourism project, a training course entitled "Web Marketing Accelerator" will be launched shortly, held by the Institute Professor and Web Marketing Expert, Ms. Valentina la Magna.

It will be structured in 10 meetings of 3h each for a total of 30h and provides indicatively for each module a first theoretical introductory part, to then move on to a more practical part that will allow the students to possess concrete knowledge and to work until the end of the year on the Social Editorial Plan of the Institute, led by the tutor and other teachers.

The idea is to accompany young people during the gradual development of a Web Marketing strategy of a hypothetical tourist activity, which will find application in the direct experiences of PCTO, providing skills that can be spent in the job market.

The first four modules will lay the groundwork for children to rely on the knowledge needed in the world of the web to then proceed to a practical application of the knowledge.

The students participating in the "Web Marketing Accelerator" course were selected according to the indications provided by the Digital Tourism working group which, in the development of Work Package 4, identified the selection criteria for participants in the WBL experiences and developed the forms to subsequently evaluate internships lasting at least 30 days.

As foreseen by the project, 7 students of the fifth classes will put into practice the skills acquired in Turkish companies specialised in digital, both national and transnational. To conclude the experimentation, after the internship, the evaluation forms created by the partnership will be used and tested for subsequent use.

The Impact of COVID-19 in Portuguese Tourism and the need for a more aggressive Digitalization process, by INSIGNARE

In 2020, the contribution of the Travel and Tourism sector to Portugal's Economy fell by 21 billion euros, equivalent to a drop of 56.4%, points out the Economic Impact Report by World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC). According to this annual report, “the dramatic collapse of the travel and tourism sector in Portugal indicates that the sector’s contribution to GDP fell 56.4% in 2020”.

The WTTC recalls that, in the last 10 years, “the growth of the travel and tourism sector surpassed that of the economy in general” and, in 2019, reached 37 billion euros, representing 17.1% of GDP, but everything has changed in the space of 12 months and due to the pandemic, having been only 16 billion euros in 2020, which represented 8.1%.

In terms of employment, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was also accentuated, with the WTTC annual report stating that “the year of harmful travel restrictions, which disrupted many international travels, resulted in the loss of 160,000 travel jobs and tourism..."
across the country”. “Job losses were felt throughout the country's travel and tourism ecosystem, with SMEs, which represent 8 out of 10 of all companies in the sector, particularly affected,” says the WTTC, also highlighting that the impact of this crisis on women, youth and minorities “was significant”.

To help fighting this situation, we fully agree with another newly released report: “To Recovery & Beyond - The Future of Travel & Tourism in the Wake of Covid-19”, by World Travel & Tourism Council and Oliver Wyman, which points out three major trends:

**Demand Evolution** - Traveller preferences and behaviours have shifted toward the familiar, predictable, and trusted. Domestic and regional vacations and the outdoors will reign in the short-term, with tourism businesses and destinations already adapting. It will be vital, however, to ensure early stimulation of the all-important recovery of international travel. Transparent communication will be even more important to travellers in spurring demand.

**Health & Hygiene** - Personal experiences, advice from experts, and concerns for distancing will guide consumer behaviour in the short- to mid-term. Businesses will have to collaborate even more closely with their extended value chains to ensure readiness and the implementation of likeminded protocols. In this context, trust, extensive communication and the flow of accurate information, between travellers and employees, businesses and suppliers, and visitors and local communities; will be a leading engine in the recovery of the sector.

**Innovation & Digitisation** - Amid stay-at-home orders, digital adoption and consumption are on the rise, with consumers now expecting contactless technologies, including biometrics among others, as a basic prerequisite for a safe and seamless travel experience. Cybersecurity is only becoming more important, particularly as remote work becomes the norm in the short to medium term and as identities are digitised. While digitisation offers tremendous opportunities, precautions are needed to make sure employees and local communities are not left behind. Interestingly, the acceleration of the digital agenda is one positive outcome of this crisis.

Our project, Digital Tourism, includes all these topics, and aims to prepare current and future workforce to cope with the changes that Society and mostly Tourism sector are facing and will face.

**International Workshops on Religious Tourism changes to Digital Format**

- 24th and 25th June, 2021, by ACISO

ACISO – Ourém-Fátima Business Association (Portugal) has been organising for several years the International Workshop on Religious Tourism (IWRT) - one of the most important international event on Religious Tourism.

The goals of the event are:
- To promote networking among its...
The target groups are:
• National and international tourism operators;
• Hotel and tourism industry entrepreneurs;
• Opinion leaders and other trade professionals.

Last year the event had the participation of 170 Hosted Buyers, 170 Suppliers and 50 Exhibitors, experts in religious tourism, registered for a total of 53 countries. Each participant had about 32 meetings.

Due to the impossibility to host the IX IWRT as it was done during the latest editions, concerning the uncertainty that COVID-19 represents, the organisation decided to move the IX IWRT to a virtual event on the 24th and 25th June 2021, returning to a physical event in 2022. This modification does not compromise the quality of IWRT and guest speakers or even the quality of the deals accomplished there, once this virtual edition is as a step forward to innovation, that follows up the technological trends for future events, as a response to the situation we are living.

The virtual event will count with live conference sessions, discussing topics of interest to the trade and will offer an extensive range of online business opportunities.

An online platform was created for the virtual IWRT, having new and exciting content that can be accessed anytime. It will be uploaded and updated by the organisation and by all registered suppliers, exhibitors and hosted buyers, who will share their company’s information and will promote their products and services with videos, documents, and photographs.

This platform will be also used to make the online One-to-One meetings. Although this time it will be experienced on a different way, it is assured the safety and participation of all IWRT registrants. For more information, visit the website at this link.

Organising digital events and promoting Hospitality sector organisations though digital channels is included in the Digital Tourism course designed for this project, which has active participants.

Good practices in the cultural heritage, by EGİNA

After the meeting in February 2021 with all partners involved the Digital Tourism project is going on straight to the next future steps.

All the other project activities will be organised during the next months, in this regard, we mention that the April 29th online meeting will involved different experts in order to talk about different good practices in the sector.

At this occasion, practical good practices in the cultural heritage will be discussed, linked to the tourism and lead by the Erasmus+ ACCEASY Project (easy to read, easy to access). The aim of Acceasy is to promote an inclusive and accessible European heritage for people with intellectual
disabilities and/or cognitive difficulties.

The project partners have already created a list of sites and monuments that will be accessible to all people, especially to those who have difficulties. All activities and the handbook produced, within the project, will be tangible and practical for everyone.

The places identified are in:

- Cyprus, Ancient Amathus, located 11km east of the city of Limassol and it is considered one of the most important ancient and historical sites of the capital;
- Italy, the Imperial Fora, the Trajan’s Market and the Museum of the Imperial Fora;
- Italy, “Giostra della Quintana di Foligno”, a jousting tournament in the Municipal Stadium inspired by a horse dating back to the 17th century;
- Slovakia, Ruins of the Čabraď Castle, in the Krupinská Planina plain in the south of Slovakia;
- Spain, Burgos Cathedral, the most emblematic building in the city of Burgos. ST. Mary's Cathedral was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1984.

Currently, thanks to all related projects at the European level, it is possible to better promote tourism at different levels, for everyone in every country thanks to the support they provide as well as the new technologies, such as Augmented, Virtual and Mixed Reality.

Events in the framework of the Digital Tourism partnership

The partnership of the project Digital Tourism will launch a series of short online events focusing on Tourism trends – the 'Tourism Talks', where experts will present and discuss with the audience several topics.

We invite you to attend the first Tourism Talk on “Digital inclusion in Tourism” which will be held on 29th April 2021, from 13:00 to 14:00 CET. Please find below the flyer with all information you may need. The event can be followed from Zoom at this link and from the Facebook page of Digital Tourism at this link.

The following sessions will be:

- “Digital experiences for the Hospitality sector” – 27th May, 13:00 -14:00 CEST
- “New trends in Tourism communication” – 28th June, 13:00 -14:00 CEST
- “Digital promotion of Tourism products” – 28th September, 13:00 -14:00 CEST
- “Digital differentiation in Hospitality: companies and people” – 19th October, 13:00 -14:00 CEST
- “Destination and Hotel strategic management” – 9th November, 13:00 -14:00 CET
- “Challenges of the 2030 agenda for sustainable tourism” – 7th December, 13:00 -14:00 CET

The content of this publication does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the information and views expressed in therein lies entirely with the authors.
Updates within the Digital Tourism project

We are glad to say that the three partner schools have already submitted the course or its adaptation to their national framework, and that a Dutch school, outside the partnership, has shown huge interest in adapting it to its offer.