

**Call: GRO/SME/15/C/N122 (COSME-TOUR-2015-3-04)**

**Title of the project: Wellness and wellbeing experience across the European Routes of the Olive Tree**

**Acronym: Well-O-live**

**Project duration and start date:** 15 months, starting on May 2016

**Short description of project:**

Tourism is undergoing large changes, motivated by the need to adapt to increasingly skilled consumption by tourists, as they expect thematic tourism offer and higher customization of experiences.

In this context, rural destinations are a fertile ground for emerging behavioral patterns of tourists, demanding for a large variety of personalized experiences and conveying a growing interest and concern about heritage, authenticity, health and environment.

Tourists travelling to rural destinations seek for holistic and personal wellbeing (physical, mental, and spiritual) associated with the recovery of social and cultural heritage of destinations, contact with nature and meaningful relationships with local community's traditions and habits.

Well-O-live project builds a transnational network linking together private and public actors from seven European countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, France, Greece, Italy and Spain). They are all committed to develop and implement an innovative model for designing, managing and promoting market-driven thematic products of rural tourism focused on wellness and wellbeing activities across the Routes of Olive Tree<sup>1</sup>.

The project designs a European olive-based tourism product that mixes together education with entertainment, making rural destinations more attractive to discover, live, work and invest in, and fostering the transition of their economies from a traditional pattern to a better managed market approach.

The thematic nature of the tourism product is nurtured by the valorisation of the European Routes of the Olive Tree, which also provides an opportunity to create synergies between different kinds of tourism such as: rural tourism, wine and food tourism, wellness and wellbeing tourism, cultural tourism, eco-friendly tourism.

Well-O-live adopts the concept of "*customer-activated services network*", as a) it recognizes the importance of having a well-organized network to offer diverse pre, on-site and post experiences related to visiting rural areas of destinations involved; b) it requires the ability of touching a series of dimensions (sensorial, affective, cognitive, behavioural and social) to provide "a package of benefits".

Well-olive conveys positive messages within the social dimension, as it develops the main tourism product around the olive oil and tree, traditionally symbol of peace, prosperity and wisdom.

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<sup>1</sup> The Routes of the Olive Tree has been incorporated into the programme "The Council of Europe Cultural Routes" in 2005

The innovative nature of the project is spread out over specific objectives and activities, that are:

- diversifying the transnational tourism offer by creating and promoting market-driven transnational thematic products of rural tourism focused on wellness and wellbeing activities. They will include cycling and walking tours, cultural experiential activities, wine and food tasting, all revolving around the olive oil tree and following the main pattern of the Routes of Olive Tree;
- promoting innovation and uptake of new information technologies in the tourism sector by implementing unconventional innovative forms of experiential marketing and promotion (Blogger Experiences). They will involve international tourism experts and bloggers, video-makers and opinion leaders expected to cooperate with local SMEs for the supply of enhanced experiences for visitors;
- complying with the changing market expectations by improving skills and capabilities of professionals and workers in the tourism sector. The project is addressed to provide multidisciplinary experiential laboratories (Experiential Labs) enabling mechanisms of capacity-building and participation within destinations;
- enhancing cooperation and dialogue at transnational level by feeding a storytelling process around the olive oil and tree as a common European heritage capable of enhancing competitiveness and diversification of European tourism offer and promote sustainability;
- allowing to transfer project practices among members and stakeholders across the Routes of the Olive Tree.

**Lead partner/coordinator:** Municipality of Brindisi (Italy)

**Partners:**

University of Eastern Finland, Centre for Tourism Studies (Finland)

Destination Makers S.r.l.s. (Italy)

Chambre de Commerce Italienne de Lyon (France)

Regional Development Agency DUNEA (Croatia)

Directorate General of Tourism, Government of Catalonia (Spain)

Cultural Foundation Routes of the Olive Tree (Greece)

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