



Calypso Widens Europe's Travel Horizons

October 27th-28th, 2011

Estoril, PORTUGAL

Summary Report

Two welcoming addresses were delivered by Vitor Ramalho, INATEL President, and Luís Patrão, President of Tourism of Portugal. These were followed by a key note speech by Alan Vella, on behalf of the European Commission, entitled "The CALYPSO Preparatory Action: Latest Initiatives in Widening Europe's Travel Horizons". Two short Calypso video clips were subsequently launched.

Panel I – The Economic Impact of Social Tourism

Moderator: Vitor Ventura, INATEL; Teresa Caldarola, Rapporteur

Celeste Eusébio, from the Aveiro University in Portugal, in her presentation named - "Economic Impact Studies Concerning Portuguese Social Tourism Programmes", presented a general framework on the strategic economic impact of *Turismo Sénior* in Portugal, managed by INATEL Foundation. Results of this study clearly indicate that Senior Tourism Programmes in Portugal, besides contributing to facilitate the participant's wellbeing, are also an important instrument for economic development especially on the local destinations visited by the participants.

The socio-economic impact study of the Senior Tourism and Senior Thermals and Health Programmes made by Aveiro University reveals that the gross value added (direct, indirect and induced consequence of the investment made) generated in the country is nearly four times superior to the government funds given to the Senior Tourism Programmes. The study emphasizes the significant impact of unquantifiable indirect and induced returns on the investment made, these being increased employment, increased family resources, less expenses concerning unemployment benefits, decreased costs to the state, contribution towards tourism seasonality as well as an increase in production of goods and services. The programmes contain thematic routes with varied touristic and cultural programmes, several regional dinners, performances and tours in each of the possible destinations, which naturally leads to higher economic benefits.

Javier Bustamante from SEGITUR, Spain, focused on European and Spanish overtones concerning the economic impact study relating to "Europe Senior Tourism". He reminded participants about the great demographic challenges for our common future in Europe. He reported the main issues from the study on monitoring and evaluating this existing low-season SEGITUR initiative. "Europe Senior Tourism" relates to holidays that citizens from different parts of Europe take in Spain, varying from 8 to 29 days. In general, the results of the study demonstrate that the initial investment of 7 million euro made by the Spanish Government and the regions involved in the project has been fully recovered, since it amounts to 9.1 million €. Concretely, the Spanish Government has recovered 1.3 € for each euro invested and other European administrations have gained 0.2 €, which as a whole represents a 1.5 € cumulative return. Mr Bustamante added that an asymmetric approach is better than a symmetric one, even if the former is more difficult initially. Other issues elaborated upon included the positive effect on employment, the evaluation of the sector-specific impacts (in particular the transportation sector) and the socio-economic issues relating to demand. Mr. Bustamante pointed out that in the future, in order to develop a massive network of senior citizens involved in tourist programmes, it would be appropriate to think about an Erasmus type of programme.

Panel II – Success Stories from Portugal

Moderator: Paulo Canario, INATEL; Teresa Caldarola, Rapporteur

João Luís Soares focused on how hotels, especially 3 and 4 stars, could benefit from the senior programme and how to promote loyalty. He manages a family hotel in Algarve which offers appropriate meals, specific entertainment and a suitable environment for the expectation of this sector. He favoured offering his establishment for social tourism

stays, since this brought business when it really mattered, that is in the low season. Mr. Soares did mention however that this had to be a volume business for it to be feasible. Over 15 years, his hotel had effectively benefitted from 16.5 Million Euros worth of business.

Domingos Silva focused on the effect of social tourism on the Casino sector. Results were encouraging, since there are many intangible and accrued benefits. He also explained that the facilities cannot only be used for traditional gambling but also for seasonal cultural and entertainment events. He suggested that there should be a better cooperation between the private and the public sector and that his Casino is prepared to invest further in promoting social tourism in the low season.

Luís Aleluia, Artistic Director at Cartaz of Theatrical Productions Company, explained that tourists participating in the INATEL programme had revitalised the tourist destinations during the low season, besides contributing towards the cultural economic dimension. Cultural activities are multidisciplinary and can take place in various venues, thus making appropriate use of private sector infrastructures. Such programmes encourage creativity and strengthen employment.

To conclude, panellist agreed that public and private sector players need to cooperate closer to revitalise tourism during the low season. All players, whether the public sector, hotels, tour operators, casinos or theatres, have an important role to play in overcoming low season financial constraints and to generate new products, particularly for the promising senior citizens market.

Panel III - Implementing Calypso: Update on the Four Calypso Projects: EST, SOWELL, AAAE, URTS

Moderator: Anna Quartucci, EFFAT; Agnes Reti, Rapporteur

EST:

Objective: to create models allowing senior citizen exchanges between Portugal, Poland and Spain during each country's off-peak tourist season.

Between March and October 2011 several meetings have been organised in order to define general characteristics of the project (exchange typology, season, management, age, income, companion, others), system of financing (at first stage a symmetric, at second stage an asymmetric model has been discussed) and possible partners to be involved. A model of cooperation among participating partners has been set up with clear definition of tasks, duties and deadlines.

Meetings and visits have been organised to learn about differences in legislation, needs and habits in participating countries, to widen cooperation on various levels and to define an appropriate model for tourism exchanges.

To successfully manage a transnational tourist exchange project, the team considers important to publish achievements, to facilitate continuation of the project after the call period is over, to support the future development of exchanges and to involve new countries in the projects.

SOWELL:

Objectives: to offer the possibility to the largest number of seniors and young people to have access to spa activities during their holiday ("wellness for all"), to identify compatibilities and/or breaks of mixed services and products in social tourism and wellness offers in low season and to develop transnational cooperation.

In the present preparatory stage, the project team concentrated on technical activities such as:

- comparative analysis of good practices, existing mixed products, compatibilities between wellness offers and social tourism services, barriers to developing products adapted to the target groups' needs.
- defining conditions of transnational exchanges (economical system, support, communication, offers, sustainability)

Regional working groups have been organised, several meetings, visits have been made to find solutions to the differences (organisational, structural and cultural) between partners, to the difficulties of realization and to elaborate the frameworks of an international cooperation.

AAAE:

Objectives: to study and develop models allowing individuals with disabilities, and their partners to easily and economically exchange holiday experiences between Portugal, Cyprus and Finland during each country's off-peak tourist season and with multilateral cooperation and promotion of the national or regional authorities and stakeholders.

A significant progress has been made since the Calypso meeting held in Vuokatti, Finland. Based on the initial project actions and on the results of the holiday concept survey, a "Pilot program" has been defined with special regard to

stakeholder assessments, accessibility and affordability. Training has been organized for the staff of participating stakeholders.

First pilot exchange groups have been set up and exchange programs organised and foreseen between Portugal and Finland as follows:

Portugal to Finland: 23rd-26th September 2011

Finland to Portugal: foreseen for 26th-29th November 2011, but postponed to a later period due to organisational reasons.

URTS:

Objectives: to facilitate low season transnational exchange of seniors, youth, disabled persons, families with low income between Italy and Malta, to help to improve quality of life, to generate economic growth of business.

A dedicated team has been set up per target group, several meetings have been organised in order to:

- analyze best practices, minimum requirements for products and services and incentives to promote social tourism
- design a working model for an international cooperation and for the realization of the pilot actions, involving both countries public and private/third sector organizations.
- provide the financial resources (involvement of holiday vouchers) eventually needed

Promotional activities have been carried out by authorities in Malta and Italy to assure the best visibility to the URTS project (Information Day in both countries, contact with tour operators, distribution of targeted brochures). Further meetings are foreseen to finalize preparatory work and assure continuation of the project after the Call period is over.

Panel IV - Implementing Calypso: Perspectives on the Future of Calypso

Moderator: Alan Vella, European Commission; Agnes Reti, Rapporteur

Ways and means of implementing Calypso were examined from the sustainability, institutional and industry perspectives, including those of SME-s.

For institutions (**Rui Paulo Calarrão, INATEL**), objectives are clear: to increase quality of life, make tourism accessible for all, fight against seasonality and increase income through transnational tourist exchange programs. Governments could aim to develop exchange programs with a minimum of 3 countries, possibly financed by EU funds, particularly those countries engaging in Calypso projects. As 1 Euro invested produces 4 Euros in return, even without EU funds, supporting Calypso could be profitable for national governments, but based on PPP, it could possibly work without governmental or European financial support as well.

As regards the sustainable continuation of the Calypso project (**Jean-Pierre Martinetti, Directeur général de la Cité de la Culture et du Tourisme Durable**), the issues and challenges are to define operational perspectives by sharing values, knowledge and strengthening support of sustainable tourism and innovative initiatives for a solid and responsible European tourism. Through being operational, innovative and cooperative, Calypso can be a successful example of sustainable European tourism. Possible links with other existing initiatives – such as ERNEST (European Research Network of Sustainable Tourism) - should also be explored further.

For the industry (**Lars Thykier, Association of Danish Travel Agents and Tour Operators**), there is a definite market potential in participating in Calypso, although it is important to avoid market imbalance. More awareness should be raised amongst stakeholders to help them recognise the benefits. Defining their niche, their partners (PPP), developing packages (travel agents), tourism facilities, events, attractions (destinations), fulfilling the needs of the target groups, training their employees, creating visibility should be key elements of the strategy of travel agents (push strategy) and destinations (pull strategy) with special regard to sustainability criteria (prioritise sustainable destinations, means of transport, CSR, ECO-labels or similar certifications, local products, programs).

More needs to be done to ensure that SME's participate directly in Calypso, particularly since there is indeed market potential (**Klaus Ehrlich, Eurogites**). Calypso can help fight seasonality and to extend the market to new client groups. For SME's successful participation in Calypso, giving less dominance to public sector/authorities, redefining the "charity" character justifying political intervention, including the private sector at the same level of decisions and responsibility (PPP) are core questions. Transparent and competition-neutral conditions, creation of cross-national value and validity of measures (i.e. vouchers), financial support/subvention given direct to tourism service, support of technical adaptation of services, trainings are considered important to reach a critical mass of satisfied individual clients.

Institutions, industry and SME's all agreed to prioritize PPP in the Calypso projects giving technical and financial support to private initiatives.