

### PESTO meets Graz! That was PESTO conference

On 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> October an enriching dissemination and networking event took place in the city of Graz (Austria). The final conference of the PESTO project, organised by E.N.T.E.R. and the project partners in cooperation with Steiermark Tourismus, presented a varied programme to the circa 120 attendees.

#### What was it all about?

As the project name already suggests, the aim of the conference was to present successfully implemented projects in the field of tourism and sustainability, and thus to spread ideas and initiatives throughout Europe. From a long list of good practice projects 20 were selected to promote their work at the conference.

The conference delegates came from all over Europe, each one an expert in a specific field within the tourism sector, all contributing to a varied spectrum of expertise and qualitative information exchange.

#### A brief overview of the conference:

The two-day event opened with key note speeches by well-known personalities such as Erich Neuhold, Steiermark Tourismus, Dr Shyam Patiar from Grwp Llandrillo Menai Coleg Llandrillo, Christian Maurer from IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems and Dewi Davies, former Regional Strategy Director with Tourism Partnership North Wales.

The delegates also came from notable tourism organisations and institutions, and during the afternoon of the first day their active participation was required. Within workshops small groups discussed intensively and critically scrutinised specific topics (which were “Sustainable tourism and labour market challenges: qualifications and training”, “ICT based communication and web2.0 in/for sustainable tourism” and “Sustainable tourism and regional development”).

When so many people with specialised knowledge gather together in one place it is of course vital to provide sufficient scope for an open exchange of ideas and views. The project fair for the 20 good practice projects provided the perfect setting for this. Visitors were able to freely discuss the project ideas, their level of innovation, and how difficulties and obstacles were overcome. Alongside the good practice projects the fair also included the IMC Krems and the Gesäuse National Park. If that was not enough the oil mill Fandler was also in attendance, allowing conference visitors to sample 17 different types of culinary biological oils.

To conclude a successful day the project partners as well as the exhibitors were invited to a small treat organised by E.N.T.E.R., namely a reception by the Mayor of Graz at the city hall. As well as enjoying fine Styrian specialities, all present were bestowed with a very special impression – a spectacular view from the city hall’s balcony across Graz’s Old Town.

The following morning began very early for the team. On the dot at sunrise the film crew responsible for producing the conference video arrived at the Schöckel, Graz’s local mountain, to capture an impression of the awakening city. Meanwhile the delegates enjoyed a more leisurely start to the second day. A presentation by Dr Baumgartner from Naturefriends International provided both impulse and stimulation, and this was followed by a facilitated open question and answer session

dealing with issues generated during the previous day's workshops. Six facilitated tables each confronted the delegates with a particular topic area in the form of a specific question. However every 15 minutes the delegates were prompted to move to another table in order to tackle some of the other questions. This resulted in much hustle and bustle, good interaction and the generation of new ideas and approaches. The whole wealth of ideas produced was then presented to all in a plenary session by each table facilitator.

The conference was a great success for the PESTO project and the entire organisation team. The feedback received from the project exhibitors was also extremely positive. Above all the good practice exchange was regarded as being particularly valuable.

If you are now curious to know more about how the conference went, who was present and are now interested in the topics addressed then please get in touch with one of the project partners or visit the project's website at [www.pesto-project.eu](http://www.pesto-project.eu), as the film of the conference will soon be available online!

**Full documentation at:**

<http://pesto-project.eu>

<http://facebook.com/Pestoproject>

