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ComPass 2016

Experience transfer in personnel competence building in the matter
of „Tourism for All/Accessible Tourism“

Project number 2016-1-DE02-KA204-003243

Report

2nd Bench Mobility, Ostrava (Czech Republic)

Topic: Accessible Tourism

The second Bench Mobility happens from the 15th to the 19th of May 2017 as an Experience exchange and visit to good practice practitioners in Ostrava (Czech Republic).

Main topic of this second mobility was accessible tourism in a very wide understanding from practical construction measures up to the topics of information, sensitization, making awareness etc. This understanding covers the historic development of this topic starting from “Accessible Tourism” plus “Social Tourism” up to the “Tourism for All” and nowadays up to the so named “Inclusive Tourism”.

All these aspects the participants at the Bench Mobility could see and discuss during the different visits and the work shop at the end.

Please remember:

Accessible tourism is a form of tourism that involves a collaborative process among stakeholders that enables people who have particular accessibility requirements, including mobility, vision, hearing and cognitive dimensions of access, to function independently and with equity and dignity through the delivery of universally designed tourism products, services and environments.

There are many factors conditioning the tourist's accessibility of one destination that can be resumed as:

- Making environments, venues, and services suitable for the widest range of customers, including persons with disabilities, families with small children and many more
- Equal opportunities to enjoy tourism experience
- Barrier-free destination (infrastructures and facilities)
- Transport suitable for all users
- High quality services delivered by trained staff
- Activities, exhibits, attractions allowing participation in tourism by everyone
- Information accessible to all (marketing, booking systems, web sites etc.)

The Mobility starts with a guide tour through Ostrava. During the guided tour organized by the Ostravský informační servis on the first day of Mobility the participants were provided with more information about Ostrava, its history and future. With the New Town Hall and New City Hall Viewing Tower they saw the largest accessible town hall and viewing tower complex in the Czech Republic.

Visit to educational facility AHOL secondary school of tourism,

Secondary school of gastronomy, tourism and spa is part of AHOL schools (3 schools – the visited one + vocational school and college). AHOL schools are private schools with a 25-year history.

Secondary school for gastronomy, tourism and spa used to be a part of vocational school, but because of their specialisation (subjects of study) they became independent in 2008. It has around 250 students.

Under the topic Qualification/VET and adult training in tourism the partners got detailed introduction in the school specialisation in Travel agency operator, Steward in transport services, Experi-





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ence/adventure tourism, Gastronomy, Hotel services. During the discussion the focus was laid down on the how and under which aspects the teaching of the topic accessibility is organised and what approaches are used.

Visit to the accommodation facility Mlýn vodníka Slámy (Mill of the water goblin Straw)

The partners could see during this visit how the topic “Accessible tourism, employment of skilled and unskilled workers” is lived in practices by a very small enterprise, well embedded in the regional environment.

Mill is located in a small village (3200 inhabitants) near Ostrava on an area (island) of 25 ha surrounded by the river Opava and the water drive. In 2007 the area was bought by a private company and began its renovation. The aim is to build a leisure-time complex using the natural potential of the territory and preserving rural traditions. In 2011 a museum of milling was opened here.

In addition to the permanent museum exhibition, there is now restaurant, guesthouse, mini zoo for children, stables and every year there take place many cultural and social events.

Guest house: 11 rooms (37 beds) in 3 houses arranged in the rural style - see the photo gallery on the web page. They are preparing one accessible room (so far they have any).

In spring volunteers help them pick dandelions in the meadows.

Events: every year they prepare events supporting countryside traditions, development of culture, social entertainment and gastronomic experiences in the region like: children's day, summer camp with horses, craft fairs, balls, theatres, wooden washtub competitions, gastronomic festivals etc.

The main clients are families with children and businesses. Frequent visitors are also seniors and schools. They collaborate with an athletic club which organize in the area outdoor training for children.

Visit to Marlenka factory (production of honey cakes)

The guided visit to the Marlenka factory was focused on the topic: Starting a business in a foreign country, employment of skilled and unskilled workers

Founder of the company is Mr. Gevorg Avetisjan, who is originally Armenian. In Armenia he has graduated as interior designer and he ran successful business in this field. Because of the unstable economic and political situation in his country he decided to leave Armenia and go to Ostrava.

Beginning in a new country was very hard. In 2002 his sister came to stay with him and one day he asked her to make him a favourite honey cake according to the old family recipe. This cake he offered also to his new Czech friends and they liked it. So he started to offer it to local sweet shops and cafes and a new business idea was born.

He started this new business in his apartment with his sister in 2003. She made 10 cakes per day and after one month he saw that she is not managing it. So he rented the first manufactory (20 m²). Company begun with 1 employee, after first year employed about 20 people.

After 2 years (in 2005) they bought a bigger building and gave job to ca 30 unemployed people. The production was still manual but for 24 hours (non-stop production). Their products came abroad to the nearest countries like Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. Nowadays Marlenka is a registered and respected trademark. They export their product to ca 40 countries.

In 2016 Marlenka had 240 employees and the turnover around 420 million CZK. The line is operated by 10 to 15 well trained employees.





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The owner says that he chooses the staff according to the intuition. For him more important that a professional qualification is enthusiasm and good human relations at the workplace.

Plans for the future: they still want to raise the number of employees and production. They have some new projects and are building a new bigger space again. Their ambition is export worldwide. They started to prepare own Marlenka coffee and in the future they would like to open the chain of cafes.

Visit to Landek Park

The partners could see and discuss with the guides during the visit to Landek Park how urban tourism is organised, which problems with practical and/informal accessibility are to face and what qualification of (seasonal) workers is required to offer a high quality and most of all authentic service.

Landek Park is a unique natural, historical and industrial locality located in Ostrava, 5 km from the city centre around the LANDEK hill (280 m above sea level). It's also attractive suburban recreational area of 35 ha with mining museum, sports and relaxation zone, camp and catering facilities. It is frequented by tourists as well se by local inhabitants, mainly by families, school children, sport enthusiasts, organizers of cultural events etc.

All objects in the park were declared cultural monuments by the Ministry of culture of the Czech Republic.

Museum is opened year-round. There are working experienced ex-miners and ex-rescue workers as tourist guides, who make the tour more interesting. Accessible is only about 20 % of the exhibitions, due to the difficult terrain.

Videos which are part of some exhibitions are available only in Czech language.

Since 1993 is LANDEK hill also a National natural monument. Protected area has in total 85.53 ha. It is a globally famous location from the point of view of geology, archaeology and biology.

There is also marked natural science and mining educative trail, which is 5.5 km long and informs about natural attractions in the protected area, history of settlement and mining of coal at Landek.

LANDEK Park is also used for sports beach volleyball, bowling, tennis, badminton, cycle lanes suitable also for inline skating, cross-country skiing, rope track, a children's playground, workout playground, petangue, mini ZOO, multifunctional halls for indoor sports During the summer there take place summer camps for children focused on sport or science.

In the natural part of the area there was opened a camp in 2015, with the capacity of ca 2000 people (or 200 tents and 50 caravans). Facilities and conveniences available: sanitary facilities (WC, showers, a kitchenette), reception, security. Catering is provided in two restaurants and a snack bar.

Visit to Fire-fighting museum

How to organize accessible tourism in an small museum located in a historic building by enthusiastic people the participants could feel and touch during the Visit to the Fire-fighting museum Ostrava.

Fire-fighting museum is part of Fire rescue services of Moravian-Silesian region. It is not an independent museum with legal personality. That is why the position of the museum is quite difficult. Fire-fighters activities and posts are given by the law, where museum management is not included. Fire-fighters can provide only education of the public and prevention, which is why the museum is built on these activities.

Museum was opened in 2005 in an old Art Nouveau building.





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Exhibition of the museum has several parts, which creates not only an insight into the history of fire-fighting, but shows and promotes also their work in the present day. Visitors can see old equipment, current technology, functioning workplace of Integrated Safety Centre, model situations and cooperation of the integrated rescue system, examples of rescue operations or working at heights.

There is also the cinema hall, where films made during real interventions of firemen are projected. The aim of the museum is not only to show the history of fire-fighting but also to educate the civilians.

It is a small museum. The number of visitors is 7,000 - 8,000 persons for a year. Half of the visitors are schools, kindergartens and groups of voluntary fire-fighters.

The tour is always guided and commented. There are 3 guides working in the museum on a half-time basis. All of them are former fire-fighters, so they use lot of their own professional experiences during guiding.

Museum is visited by visitors with disability. Because the museum is small and there are no so many visitors, they can pay individual attention to the visitors. They treat visitors in familiar way. If there is a group of blind visitors they prepare tables with exhibits which they can touch. They can organize special tours for children etc.

They always try to adapt the tour and interpretation to the group and visitors specific needs. Guides are not trained in communication with disabled visitors. They do it, because they like it (by heart) and they are learning by doing. Some of them have personal experience with disability. If they would have bigger spaces they would create haptic exhibitions.

Visit to Cooltour (cultural centre)

The visit to Cooltour and the discussions with one of the founders were focused on the topic: tourism (making Ostrava more attractive for visitors), inclusion of minorities and foreigners, strengthening of community life, sustainability.

Cooltour is cultural centre, which is a place, where people can meet each other, see a performance (theatre, music, and dance), take a beer or a coffee, participate in different workshops or seek support for their projects. It is also a place where are created and organized cultural projects helping the city to change in cultural a lively place.

Cooltour in Ostrava was established in 2011, basically when Ostrava lost the fight to be the European capital of culture. They thought that the energy and effort invest in the preparation of the candidacy should be used and the vision should be followed.

They were inspired by the cultural centres abroad, because there was nothing like this so far in Ostrava. They started as a project with the financial support from the City of Ostrava and OKD foundation.

Aims of Cooltour:

- regenerate, revitalize and activate city centre of Ostrava
- contribute to the cultural and artistic development of the city and the region
- build in Ostrava permanent, progressive and independent multi-genre scene of contemporary art, which will support and present high-quality regional, national and also international arts
- offer young people new opportunities for education, self-realization and socially beneficial projects with an emphasis on active participation of the individuals, encouraging and promoting their creativity, active attitude towards life and relationship to the city





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- maintain current artistic, cultural and social platform that will support meeting and cooperation of various Ostrava communities and interest associations, involve inhabitants of Ostrava in cultural events in the city and in active participation in cultural projects.

Staff: 12 full time employees and about 15 people in the bar (students).

Funding: 1/3 public funding and 2/3 private money.

Here are examples of some of their projects.

- **Mental cafe** – basically it is not about selling coffee, it is about give mentally handicapped people some chance to talk to healthy people. People normally try to avoid this group. They manufactured coffee court with supervisor, they go to different companies and ask them to let them sell coffee for one month every year in their lobby. This project is already working 5 years and makes its own money.
- **Experience Ostrava differently** - community festival/street fair, when they motivate people to go out and live on street for one day to meet and know their neighbours.
- **Refill / Temporary use project** - Refill is the project of the city of Ostrava built on the idea of temporary use of public spaces. Temporary use is one of the urban development tools that is used when it is necessary to find a new sense for a particular urban area (building or land) or to support ideas that need time to be developed. There are many empty public spaces in Ostrava so they try to create a tool for their temporary usage.
- **USE-IT** – it is a map of Ostrava and mobile application for young visitors, which provide them useful and updated information (each year they publish new version). Young tourists usually need different information than is normally available in the information centres. It is prepared by young local people (volunteers). It is non-commercial map,
- **Adopt a flower pot** – by this project they wanted people to realize, that it is not upon the politicians and other institutions, which people make the city, that people should care for their neighbourhood and things that are around them.

Visit to Dolní Vítkovice

Dolní oblast Vítkovice is a unique educational, social and cultural centre of Ostrava where coal used to be mined and pig iron produced. It was created by the transformation of the former industrial objects and area, where coal used to be mined and pig iron produced from 1828 till 1998. In 2002 the area was declared a National Heritage Site and in 2008 European Heritage site.

In 2012 there was opened:

- Educational guided tour (**Bolt tower**) - the former Blast Furnace - the tour is focused on the iron making process. There are organized also non-traditional tours (private parties) outside of normal opening hours. In 2015 there was opened an observation tower (80 m high) with the café (capacity 25 persons) on the top of the blast furnace.
- **Gong** (multi-purpose auditorium) - the former gasholder - it is used for conferences, international congresses, concerts, workshops and training, exhibitions and many other sorts of events. Its capacity is up to 2,000 people.





- **Small World of Technology** - the former energy centre - there are situated more than a hundred interactive exhibits which explain science and technology in an entertaining way. It is based on Jules Verne's world.

In 2013 the **Science and Technology Centre** was opened. It presents science and modern technology as an entertaining game in the area of 14,000 m². Besides exhibitions there are classrooms, lecture halls and cinema auditorium with a capacity of 200 spectators.

Workshop and Open Space Discussion:

Destination management Moravian-Silesian Tourism

The Tourism concept of Moravian-Silesian region and its implementation was presented by Ms Kateřina Buglová from the Moravian Silesian tourism. It's a destination and travel agency established by the Moravian-Silesian Region. They are able to create some tailor made packages for the groups of clients, but their main job is to promote and coordinate tourism activities around the region. In Moravian Silesian region there are 6 tourist regions. These are:

- The Jeseniky Mountains
- The Poodry Region
- Opavian Silesia
- The Beskydy Mountains
- The Ostarvsko Region
- Tesin Silesia

In the presentation, see the "ComPass 2016 BM2 Compendium", p. 24 to 29, were presented all accessible destinations region by region.

Project "FajnOVA/ City of Ostrava"

In 2016 Ostrava created a new strategic plan for the development of the City of Ostrava in 2017-2023. It is a joint plan of Ostrava's citizens for Ostrava. For the process of the creation they used participatory approach based on leadership, involvement of the experts and the public, open communication under one brand etc. Plan was created by external consulting companies BeePartner and RPIC-ViP s.r.o. It is consider one of the best practices in the Czech Republic, which other cities want to follow.

Mr. Ing. Daniel Konczynna, Bee Partner, strategic planning and development manager gave in an exhausting presentation a wide overview about the development of this new strategic plan with the steps:

- **COMMUNICATION - FajnOVA - new brand of Ostrava.** For the communication of preparation, creation and realization of the plan, there was created a brand FajnOVA, which symbolize the process of creation of the strategic plan and its expected aim – fine Ostrava.
- **EXPERIENCE - We didn't start from the zero.** Since the beginning we had some strategic plan for the years 2009-2015. There was one important experience from its creation. In 2008 the owner of the Steel company Vitkovice and the area of Brownfield came with an idea of creating scientific centre in the Brownfield.



- **INVOLVEMENT OF THE PUBLIC** -There were involved around 20 000 people (Ostrava has around 270 000 inhabitants) in the strategic development planning.
- **PROCESS - We carefully planned each step.** Process of strategic planning had several parts and outputs:
 - Analytical part (SWOT analysis)
 - Proposal of the long-term vision (2030) and strategic goals prepared by the working groups and with Ostrava's personalities.
 - Creation of the strategic plan (2023)
 - Proposal of the implementation (action plan)

One of our greatest assets for the strategic planning was that our mayor was presented all the time. He was trying to be involved in the process so deeply, that he was the real leader of the team.

From the 23 topics there were chosen 3 final priorities a 7 strategic goals:

1. Metropolis of the region with
 - Connect the city inside and with the world
 - To revive the historic centre of the city
2. Wealth in people:
 - To be a centre of first class education
 - to improve the environment for the development of business
 - To promote community life and involve citizens in city management
3. Healthy city:
 - to cultivate the environment for the live of all generation
 - to bring the city closer to the nature

Project “In Focus” - project for talent attraction management

It is an International project of the city of Ostrava focused on the talent attraction to the region. It is inspired by the Scandinavian project (Tendensor) which focused on development of new tools and attract and convince people to live in their own country and made a handbook in it with lot of good ideas.

Project is implemented within the URBACT program and is leaded by the partner from Bilbao (Spain). There are involved 10 European cities. Talent management is a pioneering process for Ostrava, there is no systematic approach to the talents in the region.

Travel agency ATIS

The travel agency ATIS is a good practice how a new business model was created for new demands, i.e. for the topic accessible tourism in the Czech Republic. Mr Petr Krc from the ATIS gave in his presentation the following detailed information:

ATIS is a travel agency, which is on the market 27 years, and is specialized on the stays in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia. There are only 2-3 tour operators doing also incoming and domestic tourism, 95 % of travel agencies focus on outgoing tourism.



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For the better orientation ATIS divided the tourism products in several according and subject. ATIS has products like Holiday with dog, Stays with the taste of beer, Eat and sleep like prince (stays on the chateaus), Relax weekend (wellness), Holiday with fishing, Holiday for big families (hotels have no rooms for bigger families, with more children), Low cost stays (in deep off season used by seniors), Holidays in thermal spa, I go alone and do not pay nothing extra (for singles), Holiday for 55+, Holiday with kids, Holiday without kids, Gluten-free holiday etc. For each product (type of holiday) we have a leaflet, which sellers get for their shop windows.

One of ATIS product is also Holiday with wheelchair - purposely it isn't called holiday on wheelchair, because families with wheelchair user go on holiday with the wheelchair, so the whole family solve the problem of accessible holiday.

Accommodation facilities, which ATIS choose for the catalogue fill in the questionnaire about the level of their accessibility which is then available on ATIS website. Physical barriers are one thing (hotel is built and furnished somehow), but there are also attitudinal barriers. There is a need to train them.

The number of accessible hotels is increasing. Today, the hotel cannot be reconstructed or built without having solved physical obstacles. New hotel must have at least one barrier-free room. The biggest obstacle is the attitude - communication and psychological barriers. Staff has to be trained to be able to communicate with disabled people.

ATIS is focused on families, family holidays. Also, there is evident increase in the number of senior clients. They create almost 60 % of clients of ATIS. Also in case of products for seniors hotels have to comply with some criteria.

From the final discussions with the project partners and the participating companies, a positive conclusion of the experience exchange can be drawn. All participants went home with many impressions, experiences and new ideas.

