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DESIGNING GREEN TOURISM CONCEPTS THROUGH LEARNING



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INTERVIEW WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT' WP 2 ON THE PROSPECTS FOR A TRANSITION TO GREEN TOURISM WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TOURISM SECTOR OF GAGAUZIA, MOLDOVA

The project expert from the team of Comrat State University - partner of the international project ENRICHER hubs - project ERASMUS-EDU-2022-CBHE-STRAND-2 doctor, associate professor Svetlana Ghenova, as part of the implementation of the project's tasks on WP2, presented the results of the interviews. The survey was conducted by filling out a questionnaire developed within the framework of the ENRICHER hubs project and involved extended answers to questions from an expert on the situation in the tourism industry of ATU Gagauzia, Moldova in general, the difficulties and issues faced by tour operators and other stakeholders in the process of modernization in the tourism sector, in particularly in the transition to green tourism. The interviews were given by representatives of the tourism industry, representatives of government bodies whose competence includes issues of tourism management. The participant in the ENRICHER hubs project conducted 7 interviews within the framework of WP 2, information on which was entered into template interview forms

Vera Garciu, manager of the Regional Tourist Information Center of ATU Gagauzia, assessing the situation in the tourism industry, notes the following: "Visits to eco-friendly villages of ATU Gagauzia where tourists can learn about local culture, traditions and ways of life, and participate in environmentally-oriented activities such as scavenging or caring for farmland: The Gagauz village of Besalma (ATU Gagauzia) is one of the few in the Republic of Moldova where ancient windmills have been preserved. Two centuries ago, there were 2,600 such mills in Bessarabia. Today they can be seen only in a few localities of the Republic of Moldova"

Speaking about the prospects for the development of green tourism, the respondent drew attention to the following factors: «We actively engage with local initiative groups of ATU Gagauzia "ECO Bugeac", ECO Düz Yalpuşel, Gagauz Koraflari and the business sector to understand what environmental issues and needs are most relevant for the region ATU Gagauzia; We actively study and then adapt successful international practices in the field of eco-tourism and development of environmental services for application at the level of ATU Gagauzia: we adopt experience from partners from Romania (the last example of the project: RO-MD Cross-Border Wine Tourism Cluster Development. The implementation of this project aims to create a cluster to promote the development of wine tourism using the principles (business-science-education), supporting the local culture of the border regions of Romania and Republic of Moldova, developing eco rural wine touristic routers, preserving historical heritage»

Speaking about the difficulties faced by tour operators in ATU Gagauzia, the Vera Garciu noted that in ATU Gagauzia the development of green tourism is just beginning, and therefore, there is

not enough infrastructure on our territory to support these types of green tourism services (we are just beginning to develop and offer green routes, hiking trails, etc.)

Among the respondents was Larisa, manager of Kara Gani, a small touristic rural winery.

Kara Gani winery is the brand name of family winery with national character from ATU Gagauzia. The winery team are engaged in growing grapes and wine production, as well as accepting tourists in our wine ethnic farmstead (in Romanian language is calling “crîșmă”. According to Larisa, “efforts are focused on creating environmentally friendly and positive tourists experiences”

Also, speaking about the challenges in developing green tourism for the small winery Kara Gani, Larisa noted: “tourists come predominantly during the green season in the tourist destination ATU Gagauzia and the constant need to mitigate seasonality throughout the year; it is difficult for us to implement the concept of green tourism in our activity, as big part of tourists is very rarely inspired to behave sustainably as those who choose more environmentally responsible trips; we must always think about the need to innovate in sustainable waste management and energy efficient solutions; we need to constantly attract investment to develop sustainable infrastructure projects, including green space upgrades and renewable energy development; we need to develop of programs and activities that promote biodiversity conservation and nature protection in the regions of ATU Gagauzia, Budjac Steppe”

Comrat State University has established close partnership relations with each of the interviewees. Based on the seven interviews conducted, questionnaire forms were filled out and submitted to WP 2 of the project for general analysis and conclusions. The results of the interviewing were presented at the meeting of partners of the ENRICHER hubs project on June 17, 2024, in a report by Giorgi Bregadze, representing the Caucasus University, Georgia

Project “Designing Green Tourism Concepts Through Learning” (ENRICHER hubs – project) ERASMUS-EDU-2022-CBHE-STRAND-2, started January 1, 2024; The grand holder of the project is Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (Finland), the international project coordinator is Nora Lappalainen, the project implementation period is 3 years

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