"Sustainable tourism for rural development"

Rural Tourism is already an important part of the European tourism sector. But many assets and resources for recreation in rural areas are yet not used, or remain undetected. **This conference is a step to broaden the view and unleash the full rural potential for leisure through a holistic approach that includes hospitality, food, gastronomy, culture, active tourism, and any other relevant aspects.**

It is a **first-ever event** that brings together stakeholders from two of the most relevant sectors for the European economy to set common ground for practical cooperation and synergies:

- *Tourism represents around 10% of European GDP, and is one of the most resilient sectors of EU economy with excellent perspectives of growth.*

- *92% of EU territory is **rural or peri-urban,** providing a wide scope of resources and public goods for 743 million habitants in Europe.*

In plenary and workgroups, open discussion will take place around four topics:
- **Vitality for smart and competitive rural areas**
- **Value chains and how to manage them in benefit of rural areas**
- **The Rural Experience**
- **Digitalization**

On Thursday 16th, each of the above is discussed in a moderated panel of experts and best-practice cases from Europe and Italy. Further 40-50 examples will be presented in a **Marketplace of Ideas** in the foyer, where participants shall vote for the three most inspiring cases. **On Friday 17th**, the four topics are discussed in smaller **work groups,** while a fifth group will deal with possible joint projects. The results are presented at the **closure session** where also the winners of the **contest** from the Marketplace of Ideas shall be announced.
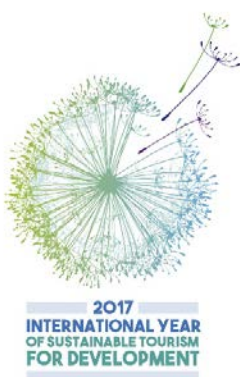
The formal programme is complemented by **social events** and visit to the Cittá Alta of Bergamo. Participants at the Marketplace of Ideas have the opportunity to present their experience to the general public over the weekend at the **AgroTravel & SlowTravel Exhibition** .

The organisation is shared between **EuroGites-European Federation of Rural Tourism** and **MER-Mouvement Européen de Ruralité,** in the context of the UNWTO **"2017 Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development"** and the implementation of the **Cork 2.0 Declaration** . It counts with support of the **UNWTO**-World Tourism Organisation, **ENRD**-European Network of Rural Development, **COPA-COGECA**, **EDEN Network**, **Regione Lombardia,** and **Ente Fiera Promoberg,** amongst others.

Languages: simultaneous translation between **Italian** and **English. French** can be spoken only.

What is the objective?

Raise awareness about the actual and future potentials for sustainable tourism and recreation in rural areas, and initiate practical steps to put them into practice by

- **Highlighting** the wide range of rural resources that can be put into value through recreation and tourism

- **Presenting** innovative, inspirational, "out-of-the-box", or even disruptive ideas

- **Detecting** new potentials for profitable business around them

- **Discussing** different views and perspectives

- **Exchanging** views and practical experience across Europe and worldwide

- **Establishing** new professional and business contacts in the field

- **Setting up** real partnerships and consortia for future joint projects

Who should participate?

- **Decision makers** at local, regional, and national levels from the private and public sector

- **Rural entrepreneurs** with interest in opening new fields and markets for their activity

- **Research and training institutions**

- **Organisations and companies** looking for partners to launch new projects or businesses

- …. and in general, **anybody involved and committed** with lively and vital rural areas in Europe and elsewhere in the world

Summary Schedule

Wednesday, 15-feb Afternoon: set-up of panels for the Marketplace of Ideas at venue
Evening: reception of participants of the Conference

Thursday, 16-feb Full day: plenary sessions
See details below

Friday, 17-feb Morning: plenary session 4
parallel workgroups (5)
See details below

Noon: Results of workgroups, contest, conclusions, closure

Afternoon: individual meetings on arrangement

Saturday 18-feb **post-congress tours and peer-to-peer meetin**

STRUCTURE

of the plenary sessions on Thursday/Friday

For each of the four topics:

- Introduction by the moderator (5')
- Moderated panel (50') with
    - o 2 experts in the topic, one from the tourism industry and the other from rural development perspective
    - o One international Best Practice case
    - o One Italian Best Practice case
- Quick overview of the practical cases that are presented in the Marketplace of Ideas in the foyer (5')
- Break-the-ice coffee: guided tour to the posters in the **Marketplace of Ideas** related to the topic, networking opportunities, animation

The Best-Practice cases for plenary will be selected by the Programme Committee by the end of January, and are invited "all cost paid" to the conference.

During Thursday and Friday morning, a "Marketplace of Ideas" with 40-50 practical experiences from Italy and Europe presented on 1x2 mts display posters is set up in the foyer. **A**ll participants at the conference shall vote for the most inspiring cases. The **three winners** will be presented at the Conclusion session on Friday.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Thursday 16-feb   **Full day: plenary session**

9:30   **Inauguration and greetings from the hosting Lombardy Region**

9:45-11:00   **Keynotes for the whole event**
> UNWTO
> ENRD - European Network for Rural Development
> EuroGites – European Federation of Rural Tourism
> MER – European Countryside Movement
> N.N.

11:00 -11:30 ***Break-the-Ice Coffee:*** *networking, animation*

11:30-12:45   1) <u>**Vitality: Smart and competitive rural areas**</u>

> **Valorisation of local assets and social dynamics:** how can recreation and tourism support the generation of new economies and opportunities that benefit rural areas as a whole. We look not only at rural economy, but the full set of sustainability including social, cultural, and environmental aspects such as

> - food production
> - human capital, infrastructure, image
> - cultural and natural assets (Natura 2000 network etc.)
> - gender opportunities
> - innovation

12:45-14:15 **Walking lunch**   *incl. guided tour to the posters or cases at the* ***Marketplace of Ideas*** *related with topic 1*

14:15-15.30   2) <u>**Value chains and how to manage them in benefit of rural areas**</u>

> Value chains combining rural resources, tourism, and circular economy: how to optimize the effects of external visitors to rural areas. This includes local cooperation, branding, post-visit sales, or promotion - but also the management of potentially negative impacts such as resource consumption or waste. Core terms are
> - Rural-urban linkages
> - Sales channels
> - Cooperation of structures: CLLD/Leader, DMO, professional organisations, etc.
> - Circular economy

15:30-16:00   ***Break-the-Ice Coffee 2:*** *guided tour to the posters or cases at the Marketplace of Ideas related with topic 2+3, networking, animation*

With the support and collaboration of

16:00-17:15 3) The "Rural Experience"

> **The concept of image, expectations and experience:** what does a visitor expect from a visit to the countryside? - how can we know these expectations, define segments, and then address and communicate with the actual and potential customer?
> - demand patterns, trends, segments
> - cultural identity and heritage
> - gastronomy and food – from the field to the table
> - active tourism (equestrian, outdoor sports, …)

17:15-17:30 Time to reflect and vote.

> *Guided tour to the posters or cases related with topic 3. If you already made up your mind about your favourite idea at the Marketplace, this is the moment to vote.*

17:30   departure to hotels

19:30   departure from hotels to Conference Dinner at Villa Delizia
http://www.agriturismovilladelizia.com

Friday 17-feb

9:00-10:15 4) Digitalization

> **Digitalization** is changing the concepts and channels for communication between providers and clients. It also offers new opportunities for long-term sales connections for local produce. How to make best use of this for organisation, management, development, and marketing of rural areas based on tourism and recreation?
> - Consumer based product design and feedback
> - Sharing Economy
> - Communication: Social Media, Blogs, Web 3.0
> - Direct sales and supply of farm produce to urban consumers
> - Knowledge transfer - E-Learning in rural areas

10:15-10:45 Coffee – Last occasion to vote!

> *The last opportunity to vote for the three most challenging and inspiring cases amongst the* **Marketplace of Ideas** *(poster displays) in the foyer*

10:45-12:30 Work Groups

> Work groups shall deal in more detail with core strategic aspects of sustainable tourism and rural development. Results should build on the discussions of the previous day, and focus on practical action to be implemented in the future. Each of them will be moderated by representatives from the partner organisations with most experience in the topic.

Group 1	**Vitality**	*Moderation: tbd*
Group 2:	**Value chains**	Moderation: COPA-COGECA
Group 3:	**The Rural Experience**	Moderation: EuroGites
Group 4:	**Digitalization**	*Moderation: tbd*
Group 5:	**Find a partner for projects**	*Moderation: tbd*

12:30-13:30   **Light Lunch**

13:30- 14:30   **Presentation of results from Work Groups** *and*
Winners of the contest at the Marketplace of Ideas

14:30-15:00   **Closure of the Conference and opening of Fair**
Italian authorities (national and regional)
Partner organisations
Patronage entities

Conference Documentation

The full conference documentation will be made available to participants after the event **online** (with password) and on **USB pendrive** (tbc).

No printed version is planned, but the full set of electronic documentation will be ISBN registered as electronic publication (tbc).

Participation at the Fair
"AgriTravel & SlowTravel Expo"

Registered participants have free access to the fair **"AgriTravel & SlowTravel Expo"** that begins right after the end of our conference. This includes various opportunities for professional exchange (seminars, workshops, etc.) and business contacts B2B and B2C through a special match-making service of the fair.

Special conditions for participants at the conference apply for **individual exhibition space** at this fair, as follows:

- Space with individual exhibition panel for posters, shared desk, chair   **150 EUR**

- Proper individual stand 3 x 3 mts with desks, chairs, electricity, and at least 5 panels for decoration   **350 EUR**

For more details, you can download the offer **here**

"MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS"

Call for Contribution

- The **"Marketplace of Ideas"** is an opportunity for **innovative, out-of-the-box, or challenging initiatives on sustainable tourism in rural areas** from Italy, Europe, and the rest of the world to showcase their experience. We look for consolidated examples that work in reality, but do not exclude ongoing projects if they open new perspectives. Introduce your case **online HERE** or use **the WORD template** - we will contact you for technical details.

- **Cases exposed at this Marketplace of Ideas** enjoy a **reduced Conference Fee.** They shall **present** their experience in the foyer of the conference with a **1x2 mts poster displays** free of cost. These displays will also be placed at the following B2C **Fair "AgroTravel & SlowTravel Expo"** over the week-end, generating direct impact and possible clients in the future.

- A **contest** **to be voted by the conference participants** will select three cases that they consider most inspiring. The winners will be presented during the Conclusions of the conference, and receive refund of their participation cost *(maximum 500 EUR)*.

- **Selection** by the Programme Committee of **two comprehensive cases in each area** *(one from Italy, one from Europe)* for plenary sessions on Thursday 16th. These selected cases will be invited "all cost paid", but can **NOT** participate in the contest.

- **Electronic-only presentation of cases** (i.e. without physical exposition with a panel at the Marketplace of Ideas) is possible, following a standard template *(PowerPoint or PDF)* that assures a common structure and allows for comparing all cases along the same criteria. Such cases will be included in the conference documentation, but cannot participate in the contest.

- **Deadlines:**
    - **25th-January-2017** for cases to be selected for presentation in plenary
    - **8th-February-2017** for the rest (poster displays, or only electronic)

Panellists **for the four sessions in plenary** will be invited on private notice. However, **if you have an innovative, out-of-the-box, or disruptive view on recreation in rural areas** and would like to be part of a panel, **we invite to propose yourself** at **programme@strd2017.org**

Papers

Additional to the practical cases, we welcome more comprehensive studies, essays, or articles. They will not be presented in the plenary sessions, but may be used in the WorkGroups on Friday morning, and will be also included in the conference documentation.

Such papers can be sent directly to programme@strd2017.org They should comply with the usual requirements for scientific publications. In case of doubts, please contact the Programme Committee for more detailed technical specifications.

REGISTRATION FEES for **international participants:**

With registration until 25th-January-2017:

* * Members of EuroGites, MER, and <u>practice cases
  with poster display at the Marketplace of Ideas</u>   **150 EUR**

* * Members of organisations related with tourism
  and rural development   **195 EUR**

* * Other participants in general   **250 EUR**

* * Education and Research Institutions   **on request**

Registration after the 25th-January-2017 will bear a <u>**surcharge of   50 EUR**</u>

*This fee **includes** the local transfers, congress participation, documentation, full social program and meals from Wednesday evening to Friday afternoon, guided tour to Bergamo Città Alta.*

Accommodation is on account of participants, *alternative options will be suggested at preferential rates at two levels (2- and 4-star-hotels) in due course. Rates start at 40 EUR/sgl room incl breakfast*

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Bergamo   is a city of about 120.000 habitants, situated in centre of the region of Lombardia in the north of Italy. It is set at the foothills of the Alps that begin immediately north of the town. Due to its rich historic and cultural heritage, especially in the UpperTown ("Cittá Alta") that is still surrounded by Venetian walls, it is the second-most visited city in Lombardia after Milan, which is only 40 kms away.

A guided tour to Bergamo "Città Alta" is included in the registration fee.

ACCOMMODATION can be organised in three alternatives:

- Own arrangement of participants. We suggest to use **Booking.com** or **AirBnb**

- Apartment or 1/2 – Star – guesthouses and hotels   *(starting at 40 EUR/person/night)*

- Hotels at 3-4 star level   *(starting at 60 EUR/person/night)*

    NOTA: *preferential rates including accommodation and breakfast for conference participants at selected hotels will be offered in due course*

FREE bus shuttle from the city centre *(Piazza Giacomo Matteotti and Railway Station)* to the venue at Fiera Bergamo will be available for registered participants at set times.

For **AIR TRAVEL**   we recommend the following options:

- **Bergamo "Il Caravaggio" (BGY)** airport (4 kms) is the third-busiest airport in Italy and served by many low-cost airlines from all across Europe: **RyanAir, Wizz Air,** and **BlueAir** are the most important.

- **Milan Malpensa (MXP)** is served by all international regular airlines. Direct coach connection several times a day to Bergamo city centre (see **here**).

- **Milan Linate (LIN)** is closer to Milan city centre, but no direct public transport to Bergamo is available (only via Milano Centrale railway station) – *we discourage to use this airport.*

    Transfer from and to Bergamo airport will be arranged for all registered participants **free of charge.** One free transfer from Milano Malpensa will also be organised in the later afternoon of Wednesday 15th-February.   The exact schedules will be defined depending on arrival times of participants.

For arrival by   **CAR,** you find the exact location of the venue **"Fiera Promoberg"** at the bottom of the website **http://strd2017.org**