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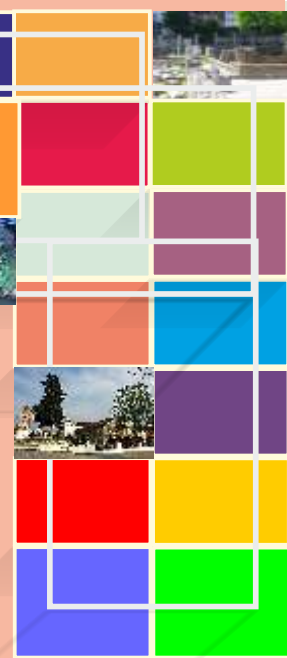
With the support of the Europe for Citizens  
Programme of the European Union



# Towards Excellence in Cultural Tourism Network

Newsletter # 1

February 2014



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Europe for Citizens  
Programme  
2007-2013

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## The Network in Brief:

The Network has been established within the framework of the "Towards Excellence in Cultural Tourism" project, co-funded by the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Union, Action 1 - Active Citizens for Europe, Measure 1.2. Networks of Twinned Towns.

The project aims at fostering cooperation at European level between municipalities on the theme of intangible cultural heritage preservation and valorization through cultural tourism.

The Municipality of Sandanski is the coordinator of the international initiative and the partners are Härryda Municipality, Sweden; Local Government Association, Malta; Sociedad de Desarrollo de Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain; Municipality of Sepino, Italy, and Municipality of Agia, Greece.

Our aim is to jointly raise each local community's capacity to address the needs of the fast growing cultural tourism sector and develop adequate strategies and products to promote and make use of our tangible and intangible heritage for tourism. For our towns the traditions, folk arts and crafts represent important resources from social and cultural perspective and taking common action for their valorization and continuation is important for achieving inclusive and sustainable growth both of the local communities and the EU as a whole.

The international project will get together the public authorities, citizens, youth, seniors, artists and small and medium businesses, NGOs, cultural and tourism organizations from the six European states, partners in the project. Six different thematic events will be organized during the lifetime of the project, with focus on active aging and intergenerational learning, valorization and continuation of traditional culture; fostering transfer of knowledge and know-how among generations; traditional culture and entrepreneurship.

The Towards Excellence in Cultural Tourism project is co-funded by the Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-2013 of the European Union, Action 1 - Active Citizens for Europe, Measure 1.2. Networks of twinned towns.



Sandanski  
Municipality



HÄRRYDA  
KOMMUN



Local Councils'  
Association



EXCMO. AYUNTAMIENTO  
SAN CRUZ DE TENERIFE



HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
MUNICIPALITY of AGIA



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# Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-2013

The main objective of the Europe for Citizens Programme is to bring Europe closer to its citizens and to give them the opportunity to be active in the construction of Europe. In this way citizens can get involved through the programme in transnational exchanges and cooperation activities, contributing to developing a sense of belonging to common European ideals and encouraging the process of European integration. This programme supports a wide range of activities and organisations promoting active European citizenship, especially the involvement of citizens and civil society organisations in the process of European integration.

## Programme objectives:

### General objectives:

- ⇒ Giving citizens the opportunity to interact and participate, thus developing citizenship of the European Union;
- ⇒ Developing a sense of European identity, based on common values, history and culture;
- ⇒ Fostering a sense of ownership of the European Union among its citizens;
- ⇒ Enhancing tolerance and mutual understanding between European citizens;
- ⇒ Promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, and intercultural dialogue.

### Specific objectives:

- ⇒ Bringing together people from local communities;
- ⇒ Fostering action, debate and reflection;
- ⇒ Promoting Europe's values and achievements, while preserving the memory of its past;
- ⇒ Encouraging interaction between citizens and civil society organisations contributing to intercultural dialogue, developing closer ties between citizens.

## The programme supports four main types of actions:

**Action 1** - Active Citizens for Europe: involving citizens either through activities linked to town-twinning or through other kinds of citizens' projects.

**Action 2** - Active civil society in Europe: targeted to civil society organisations either through structural support on the basis of their European level work programme or through support to projects.

**Action 3** - Together for Europe: including high visibility events, studies and information tools.

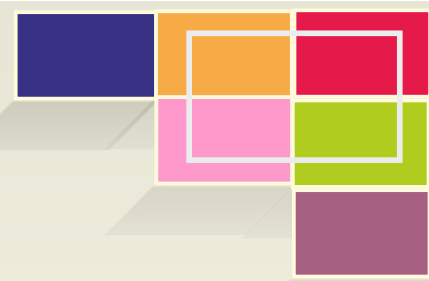
**Action 4** - Active European Remembrance: support to projects aiming at preserving the sites and archives associated with de deportations as well as the commemorating of victims of Nazism and Stalinism.

More information is available on the official site of Europe for Citizens Programme:  
<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens>

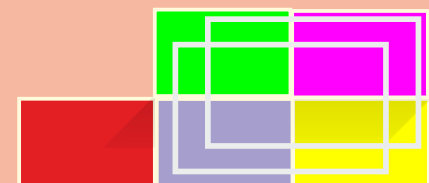


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## Who we are



### Municipality of Sandanski



Municipality of Sandanski is the initiator of the Towards Excellence in Cultural Tourism Network and the coordinator of the TECT project. The Municipality is situated in the South - West region of Bulgaria and includes a big part of Sandanski-Petrich valley, along the middle course of the Strouma River. The town of Sandanski is the main administrative, cultural and economic centre of the Municipality. A significant advantage of the town is its unique transitional-Mediterranean microclimate. It has attracted people ever since ancient times. This is the reason for its 3200 years of rich history and the unique archeological wealth. There are traces of prehistoric, Thracian, Hellenic, Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman and Bulgarian Revival heritage. There are around 80 mineral springs in the area and over 50 hotels providing SPA and balneological services. The mineral water in Sandanski is famous for its proved healing characteristics. Sandanski is also famous for its wine production and for its well preserved intangible heritage – diverse folklore, arts, and cuisine. There are several traditional festivals dedicated to music, wine, arts, folklore, etc. among wich the famous international music festival „Pirin Folk“.

Härriyda Municipality is a highly valuable network member, as their good relationship with businesses and associations, their experience in incorporating art in all larger building projects and in nature and gardening tourism, as well as their increasing collaboration with neighboring municipalities will largely contribute to the short and long term developments of the project. The municipality has 35000 inhabitants and Sweden's second largest airport. Around half of the municipality is covered in forests and there are 200 lakes. The municipality covers a valuable historic area, including an old mansion and a park. A lot of resources have, for many years, been spent on public art, which makes the territory even more attractive. There are a number of artists living in the municipality contributing to the artistic appearance of the region. Many elderly people are active in historic/cultural organisations, making the municipality a good example of active ageing. The municipality has a very popular 'cultural building' with a wide range of facilities and activities taking place, such as a modern library incorporated with a café, meeting rooms, an art exhibition hall, theatre, etc.

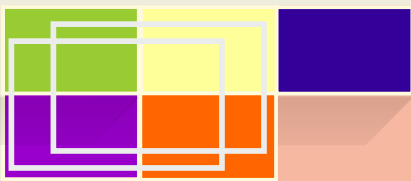
### Harryda Municipality



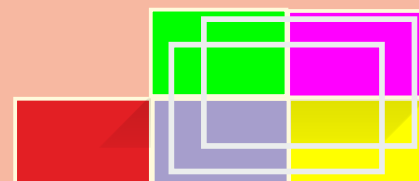


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## Who we are



### Local Government Association Malta



The Local Government Associations has extensive experience in networking and European projects management as since 2007, the LGA had successfully participated in various EU funded projects under the following programmes: IEE, ICT PSP, MED, INTERREG, LIFE, Europe for Citizens.

The Local Government Association is established in 1994 through the issue of specific Regulations entitled: Local Councils (Association) Regulations, 1994. The aims of the Association include those of protecting and promoting the common interests of Local Councils as well as offering consultancy services, training on its own initiatives and in conjunction with any other Councils.

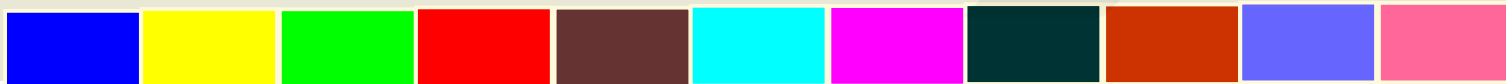
The association is the single public authority that represents all 5 regions and 68 local councils in Malta and Gozo. The LGA enjoys a high level of competence and it is involved in the national policy development process by regular meetings with the director of Local Government and the Ministry and other relevant stakeholders.

The LGA takes part in the Committee of the Regions and it is the only supporting structure for Covenant of Mayors in Malta.

Sociedad de Desarrollo de Santa Cruz de Tenerife coordinates efforts and tourism related initiatives for a competitive, modern, sustainable and responsible tourism sector. It works to create strategies aimed to develop initiatives to create/improve local products, to strength the competitiveness of the local tourism sector and to adopt quality systems, through specific projects and encouraging participation by public and private sector.

The city is known for its Carnival, declared International Tourist Festival in 1980 and sits on a territory called Añaza by the Guanches, prehispanic inhabitants of the Canary Islands known by their mummifications procedures, which can be seen at the Museum of Nature and Man, where is located the largest existing collection on the Guanche culture. Many of these archaeological remains are from the Anaga massif, a volcanic Rural Park with one of the last laurel forests dating to the Quaternary. In the massif are located numerous towns and villages, which celebrates popular festivities every year where you can sample traditional Canarian cuisine characterized by its simplicity, variety and richness of ingredients from land and sea.

### Sociedad de Desarrollo de Santa Cruz de Tenerife







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## Who we are

### Municipality of Sepino

Sepino Municipality has extensive experience in the organization of cultural events, like theatrical representations; archaeological seminars and conferences; thematic arguments (archaeo-industrial heritage, cattle-truck evaluation, recovery and valorization, etc.)

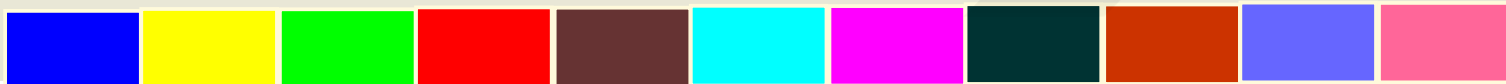
The Municipality of Sepino is situated to the bottom of the Matese mountains in the center of the Appennino. The town of Sepino is one of the important touristic sites of the region. The archaeological sites of Altilia were interested by different peoples like Samnites (Pre-Roman population), Romans, Longobards and others, and is inhabited nowadays by families of farmers. Close to the archaeological site of Altilia is present one of the main important cattle-tracks used before the Roman era until the middle of the last century for the movement of the cows and sheep from the mountain of Abruzzo to the plains of Apulia and, the cultural heritage is linked with this tradition. Sepino is also famous for the water sources, in the past used for different proto-industrial activities (mills and wool-mills) and nowadays for the bottling of still and sparkling water.



The Municipality of Agia has extensive experience in networking and European projects management, in cultural heritage preservation, valorization, as well as in tourism related initiatives.

The total area of the municipality is 668.26 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of 11.400 inhabitants. The current form of the municipality arose with the "Kallikratis" Program from the extension of the original municipality of Agia by the merger of pre-existing municipalities of Lakereia, Evrimenon and Melivoia. The Municipality of Agia is the coastal municipality of the Regional Unit of Larissa with a coastline of 60km, where picturesque bays alternate with long beaches, with a unique blend of Kissavos mountain with the green and blue of the Aegean sea. The area attracts tourists, both from Central Greece but also from various Balkan countries. It is known mainly for the dense forests of Kissavos mountain, dozens of springs, lakes, rivers, waterfalls, rare species and rich animal kingdom confirm the picture that the area is unspoiled. Peneus River's Delta connects the Tempi valley and the Kissavos' mountain and it has been a subject of study due to its wetland.

### Municipality of Agia





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# Our Aims and Objectives

The TECT project aims at fostering cooperation at European level between municipalities on the theme of intangible cultural heritage preservation and valorization through cultural tourism. Therefore the Network's structure and activities are specifically conceptualized to affect wide target groups and actively engage the local communities. Our specific objectives are: to establish a sustainable network of municipalities, cultural organizations, small businesses, and tourism centers; to promote sustainability, competitiveness, and respect of local identities; to reinforce the sense of European citizenship by strengthening the relations among European local communities.

The Towards Excellence in Cultural Tourism Network envisages fostering cooperation, networking and dialogue at several levels:

On local level - all social actors will be encouraged to cooperate and participate in the policy making process and thus citizens will be given the opportunity to further influence and participate in the development of a sustainable and inclusive economy.

On the European level, municipalities/regions will develop common policies and strategies for development of the cultural tourism sector and achievement of inclusive and sustainable growth, both of the local communities and the EU as a whole.

The project aims at strengthening the links between European local communities and through the planned activities we expect it to give citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in the construction of a tighter - knit Europe, identify and cooperate on topics of common interest and get to know each other's cultural specificities from one hand and the common heritage and European values they share from the other.

Furthermore, we designed the project events specifically in order to present to local communities' citizens the opportunities the European Union offers to them for sustainable growth and development, and to provide them with the means to fully benefit from European cooperation and networking, thus encouraging entrepreneurship, creativity and active participation in the public life, decision and policy making processes both on local and European levels. Special attention is given to intergenerational learning and active ageing through the involvement of senior citizens and the younger generations. Through the active involvement of seniors we hope to contribute to the preservation of the memory of Europe, by promoting the continuation of tradition, folk arts and crafts. The project aims at promoting a more inclusive society, based on active participation, intercultural dialogue and an enhanced sense of a European identity and citizenship.



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# What is the project about?

## Towards Excellence in Cultural Tourism Network *A Shared Vision of Cultural Europe*

Dear partners,  
Dear citizens,

The TECT project's mission is the establishment of an efficient European Network of towns, addressing the challenges related to our intangible cultural heritage, its preservation, valorization, and continuation. For this reason, we decided to create a shared platform for discussion, experience exchange, and cooperation. As both European and cross-sectoral cooperation are of crucial importance for reaching our aims, we seek to actively involve the local stakeholders from each of the partnering towns in the Network's activities.

***In order to fully facilitate your access to information and to provide you with opportunities and tools for active participation, we are setting up a shared platform for discussion, experience exchange and cooperation.***

You will have the possibility to keep track of the project developments through the multilingual website (to be launched in March), where up-to date information, detailed calendar and program of the project events, a discussion board and all tangible results will regularly be published. Moreover, as the project's main activities are focused on the creation of efficient Network, a "What is there for me?" section will be created, broken down into thematic sub-sections, containing specific explanatory articles, discussion topics, announcements, and news. It will also contain thematic discussion boards and feedback forms, where you will be able to give us your feedback and communicate with the participants in all of the six towns. We will keep you updated through the Network newsletter too that will be regularly sent to your e-mail. From March on, you will also be able to join the TECT Network through the social media: Facebook, Twitter and Google +.



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# What is the project about?

*Starting from February 2014, six public events with different framework and focus will be held*

The Kick-off meeting will be held in Härryda, Sweden, where the first draft of the strategic documents will be finalized by the partners and submitted for public discussion.

The Network structure, priorities, and goals will be presented for further discussions and amendment during the workshop in Tenerife, Spain. There, experts in the relevant sectors will share best practices and propose specific measures for the development of their relevant sectors and the Network as a whole.

The Forum in Greece will build on the results of the Workshop by setting the focus on inter-generational dialogue and active aging. The event will involve all the target groups and the themes will be: valorization and continuation of traditional culture; fostering transfer of knowledge and know-how among generations; traditional culture and entrepreneurship.

As SMEs are in the core of the local communities' development, their active involvement in the Network is crucial for the achievement of all the objectives and goals set. Therefore, the Cultural Tourism Fair in Malta is planned in order to create opportunities for actors in the fields of culture and tourism to create sustainable partnerships, access new markets, exchange ideas.

The Cultural Tourism Fair will be followed by a Festival of Cultures, which aims at creating connections among traditional artists and artisans and allowing citizens to taste the cultural richness and diversity of Europe. It will be integrated into the annual international festival of folk music and dance Pirin Folk Sandanski, Bulgaria.

The project will be completed by a Closing event in Sepino, Italy, where the project results, the final version of the structure of the Network, its strategic priorities and long-term goals, and action plan will be presented to the public.





## Who will benefit from the actions and how?

### LOCAL AUTHORITIES :

Policymakers will enrich their own competences by exchanging experiences and good practices make long-lasting and sustainable partnerships, which can serve as a basis for future cooperation in other fields

- ⇒ Promote their territories as tourism destinations, develop international, cross-sectoral cooperation and implement the joint strategies on the way to improve the quality and visibility of the European cultural tourism offer
- ⇒ Become aware of the importance of the European cultural heritage as a means to foster development

### CITIZENS will:

- ⇒ Communicate and exchange ideas, as with the actors on the local level, as with citizens from other European states and thus exercise active citizenship
- ⇒ Increase their knowledge on European policies and the opportunities the EU provides
- ⇒ Become aware of the importance of preservation and valorization of intangible cultural heritage and the opportunities it provides for entrepreneurship
- ⇒ Get to know each other, exchange ideas and engage in intercultural dialogue, resulting in the promotion of European values

### SENIORS will:

- ⇒ Increase the awareness of their social utility in order to promote Active Ageing;
- ⇒ Share their experience and knowledge to the younger generations and enrich their own competences in terms of innovative practices, European policies and opportunities of the EU

### YOUNG PEOPLE will

- ⇒ Enrich their knowledge of Tradition and crafts thanks to their cooperation with senior citizens, acquire new skills and know how, increase their awareness of the importance of the shared cultural heritage, participate in discussions and decision making processes;
- ⇒ Meet business, institutions and organizations' representatives, make new contacts, find potential employers, meet successful entrepreneurs and learn from their experience

### SMEs, NGOs, CULTURAL AND TOURISM ORGANIZATIONS will:

- ⇒ Optimize their operational capacity and develop new synergies through good practices exchange with their European colleagues
- ⇒ Discuss their problems and seek common solutions with the support of all other target groups
- ⇒ Communicate their professional requirements to decision makers and educational institutions
- ⇒ Promote their products and services, expand their markets and make new partnerships
- ⇒ Help establishing the SMEs, NGOs, cultural and tourism organizations as key actors in the development and promotion of cultural tourism



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## In the spotlight:

# Harryda Municipality hosts the Kick-off Meeting

## Kick-off Meeting Härryda Municipality 19-21 February 2014

Härryda Municipality has approximately 35 500 inhabitants and has Sweden's second largest airport and is located very closely to Sweden's second largest town Gothenburg in the south-west of Sweden. Although Härryda isn't located on the coast itself, the beautiful west coast archipelago with thousands of islands is on the doorstep. Gothenburg also has Scandinavia's largest port, which is of major importance for the region.

Härryda is a popular municipality for businesses to locate in and the population is growing every year. The municipality employs between 2 500 - 3000 people. Around half of the municipality is covered in forests popular to walk and ride in. There are around 200 lakes in which you can bathe, fish, canoe etc. Most people speak very good English. The municipality has a young population, a high level of education and relatively low unemployment compared to the rest of Sweden.



The main residential centres within the municipality are Mölnlycke, Landvetter, Härryda, Hindås, Rävlanda and Hällingsjö. The largest one is Mölnlycke, which has about 15 000 inhabitants. The society sprang up towards the end of the 19 th century. Before that craftsmanship supplemented the poor farming. The second largest Landvetter has about 7000 inhabitants and the airport is located south of Landvetter and Härryda.



Hindås was in the early 18th century an important tourist destination. Many people from Gothenburg came on day trips by train to practice winter sport here. The first railway line came 1894 and was of major importance, as the establishment of the Gothenburg – Landvetter airport was when it came 1977.



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# In the spotlight:

## Harryda Municipality hosts the Kick-off Meeting

### Kick-off Meeting Programme Härreda Municipality

#### Wednesday 19 February

- 10.00 Introduction of the partners + Guided Visit to the ski jump
- 13.00 Greetings by the Municipal Commissioners. Presentation of the meeting agenda and presentation of Harryda municipality and the Europe for Citizens Programme\*
- 14.00 Presentation of the cultural tourism offer of the partnering towns
- 16.00 Presentation of the TECT project and objectives
- 17.30 Folk Dance show at the Rotundan
- 19.30 Welcome dinner with local commissioners and representatives from the municipality, at Hjortviken

#### Thursday 20 February

- 9.00 Workshop: Structure and strategic priorities of the Network, dissemination and evaluation plans
- 14.00 Discussion on the challenges of cultural tourism and the possibilities the Network offers:
- 14.00 *Tour of local cultural sites, the church and the library and discussion*
- 15.30 *Short presentation of challenges in local cultural tourism by the Head of the Culture Department and the Economic development manager*
- 16.00 *Exhibitions, workshops, shows by local artisans and artists in the Stationhouse\**

#### Friday 21 February

- 8.30 Discussion among partners and citizens on the short-term and long-term goals of the Network\*
- 10.30-11.00 Coffee break
- 11.00 Conclusions and operative perspectives of the Kick-off Meeting
- 14.00 Cross-country skiing in the surroundings
- 19.00 Music show at Hindes Stationhouse

\* The event is open to the public



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# What's comming next?

## TECT Project Events Calendar

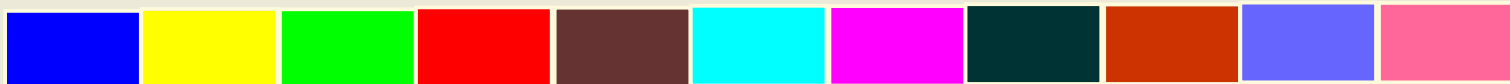
**Towards Excellence in Cultural  
Tourism Workshop**  
26-28 March, 2014  
Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain

**Cultural Tourism and  
Active Ageing Forum**  
21-23 May, 2014  
Agia, Greece

**Cultural Tourism Fair**  
2-4 July, 2014  
Malta

**Festival of Cultures**  
6-8 September, 2014  
Sandanski, Bulgaria

**TECT Project Closing Conference**  
26-28 November, 2014  
Sepino, Italy







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## Municipality of Agia

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