



EEN Newsletter Issue 3

January 2013

VISIT WWW.ECOTOURISM-NETWORK.EU AND JOIN THE EEN ON ECOLNET.NING.COM!

EEN AND ECOLNET

The European Ecotourism Network's Online Community by the ECOLNET team

In line with the constantly developing social media tools, we would like to invite you to become members of our brand new European Ecotourism Network's Online Community: <http://ecolnet.ning.com>.

The European Ecotourism Network (EEN) was created through the ECOLNET Project (www.ecotourism-network.eu) with the aim of promoting quality standards in ecotourism in Europe.

Since our object as EEN is the advancement of the sector's interests, the enhancement of networking opportunities in the field and the fostering of dialogue with relevant stakeholders and practitioners, we have created an Online Community for just this purpose.

The Online Community is an innovative and interactive way to both learn about new developments and ideas in the Ecotourism field and also to promote businesses, associations and all other relevant stakeholders in the field of ecotourism. Our aim is to foster dialogue and the exchange of experience between community members throughout Europe, offering a forum for members to voice their ideas and promote their products and best practices.

The online community also offers to its members the privilege of free access to the

innovative online E-Evaluation tools and E-Learning Packages created through the ECOLNET Project to assess compliance of a business with the European Ecotourism Labelling Standard (EETLS).

Lastly, by becoming a member of the Online Community, you also get access to the [Destinet portal](#) and a large database of stakeholders of sustainable tourism as well as the *Atlas of Excellence and the Market Place* offering promotional opportunities to businesses.

For any further information or enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact us: e.sarantou@prismanet.gr.

SEND US YOUR NEWS

We will be glad to distribute your news to our 300+ members and contacts across Europe.

Get your news in the next newsletter or in the EEN online community by sending an email to: e.sarantou@prismanet.gr



About the EEN and ECOLNET Project

The ECOLNET project is a 3-year European project, running from 2010 to 2013, co-funded by the E.C. through the Lifelong Learning Programme. It is implemented in 10 EU countries and involves 11 organisations.

The European Ecotourism Network (EEN) is a network of organisations that aims to ensure that ecotourism offerings in Europe are part of a genuine conservation and sustainability effort. EEN supports the development and implementation of the European Ecotourism Labeling Standard (EETLS), a product of a previous Leonardo da Vinci project, ECO-DESTINET, refined and updated by ECOLNET.

For more information on ECOLNET and EEN visit: www.ecotourism-network.eu



Ecotourism in Spain: Sustainability, Cooperation and Innovation

by Amanda Guzman

TUREBE, a group focused on the technological and sustainable development of Spanish Ecotourism Destinations and businesses, presented the "Ecotourism in Spain" Club at FITUR 2013 (International Tourism Trade Fair of Madrid). The "Ecotourism in Spain" Club is a unique tourism product in that it is being developed in Protected Areas accredited with quality and sustainability systems, which allows for the enjoyment of the best of Spanish nature while contributing to its conservation.

The "Ecotourism in Spain" Club is conceived by Tourspain -a body of the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism- as a **certified quality supplier of tourism for Spanish protected areas** (National Parks, Natural Reserves, Biosphere Reserves, Geoparks, Natura 2000 Sites). These are destinations that are committed to sustainable tourism through systems like the ECST (European Charter for Sustainable Tourism), the Spanish Biosphere Reserves Product Club, or Geoparks Product Club, which have tourism service suppliers also committed to improving the sustainability of their business with a three year Improvement Plan. At present, **over 600 tourism businesses** are adhered to one of these systems and therefore to the "Ecotourism in Spain" Club.



TUREBE is an Innovative Business Group, comprising of a group of private or public companies, institutions and business associations, linked to the ecotourism sector, which strive to collaborate in a series of initiatives designed to promote innovation. TUREBE was created to provide innovative, collaborative and sustainable solutions for Protected Areas and ecotourism business of these areas. The next assembly of TUREBE will take place in April 2013 where they will decide

whether they will take the necessary steps to be the manager of the "Ecotourism in Spain" Club.

TUREBE has developed several innovative projects: Marine Stewardship and Biodiversity; Interactive Routes in Biosphere Reserves; Landscape Interpretation, Environment Information & Guides through augmented reality technology and geolocation (I-Cairn). They are currently developing a pilot project called "Ecotourism Payback Experience" that aims to design a new and attractive system for responsible tourists to enjoy an exclusive ecotourism experience, through the visit of fascinating nature conservation actions. The project will define the "payback" system so that visitors and tourism businesses can contribute to biodiversity conservation of the destination. This system is also used to increase the customers' interest and loyalty. The tourism products designed within this project would be part of the product catalogue of "Ecotourism in Spain" Club and they are available in www.soyecoturista.com.

More information:

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Connecting Past & Future in Olympos/ Antalya

by Herbert Hamele

On 26th September 2012 the German – Turkish Organisation RTM ("Responsible Tourism Management") organized a international conference on sustainable tourism and ecotourism entitled "Connecting Past & Future" in Olympos/ Antalya. About 60 decision makers and tourism stakeholders from the local, regional and national level discussed with international experts the opportunities to make their hotels and travel packages more sustainable and how to use the rich nature, culture and host population for innovation.



Herbert Hamele/ECOTRANS presented the European Ecotourism Labelling Standard (EETLS) as state-of-the-art guidelines for decision makers. As a tangible result the participants agreed to use the European Ecotourism Labelling Standard and the related e-tool to assess the sustainability level of their tourism businesses. The assessment results shall be considered in the development of an action programme for sustainable tourism development in the region.

EEN & ECOLNET ACTIVITIES

Invitation to attend the ECOLNET E-Seminar

by the ECOLNET team

The ECOLNET project and the European Ecotourism Network (EEN) would like to invite you to attend the e-seminar to be held on Wednesday April 24th, from 10.00 to 13.00 CET (Central European Time), to discuss the online tools and learning packages that have been developed and piloted within the framework of this project, to assess compliance with the criteria of the European Ecotourism Labelling Standard (EETLS).

Specifically, the project partners, the ecotourism businesses and the certification agencies that have participated in the piloting of the e-tools will discuss the concept behind the development of the tools, their feasibility and evaluation; and will comment on the effectiveness of the learning packages. A report of the pilot testing across the participating countries will also be presented, including suggestions for the improvement of the e-tools and the learning packages.

If you are interested in participating, please become a member of our [online community](#) and visit our [Facebook page](#), where you will find further information regarding the electronic platform that the seminar will be conducted on, as well as technical details.

If you are an ecotourism business or a certification agency and would like to maximise your benefits from the e-seminar, you could complete the self-assessment tool. In order to access the tool, please contact Luca Rioli at luca.rioli@i-maginary.it.

2nd European Ecotourism Conference

by Andrei Blumer

When? October 23rd-25th 2013

Where? Poiana Brasov, Romania

We have the pleasure of inviting you to the 2nd European Ecotourism Conference on October 23-25th 2013, in Poiana Brasov, Romania, which is organized by the Association of Ecotourism in Romania (AER) within the framework of the [European Ecotourism Knowledge Network \(ECOLNET\)](#), supported by the European Commission.

The theme of the Conference is **Destinations and Labelling for Ecotourism Development in Europe**, offering a unique opportunity to get in touch with professionals and stakeholders from a variety of sectors in ecotourism, across the continent and beyond. The objective of the conference is to foster and develop cooperation and the exchange of knowledge and best practices, for responsible practitioners and ecotourism developers in order to address the following topics:

- A. Can the concept of ecotourism in Europe be translated into commonly agreed standards based on the European Ecotourism Labelling Standard (EETLS)?
- B. Is the concept of *ecotourism destination* commonly understood and agreed upon by the ecotourism developers and protected area networks in Europe as one of the main tools for nature conservation and regional sustainable development?
- C. Can the concept of *ecotourism destinations* attract the interest of the main ecotourism and protected area promoters in Europe in order to better communicate with the general public and potential tourists?



For a period of two days, the participants will be involved in debates and fruitful discussions regarding the current understanding and future development of new ecotourism initiatives in Europe.

For a further day, the participants will also have the opportunity to experience some of the most inspiring ecotourism offers in the Romanian Carpathians: searching for wolves, bears and lynx tracks in the Carpathian forests, hiking or biking along the trails crossing some of the most exciting high nature value landscapes of Europe, discovering proof of the long

history of Transylvania's multi-ethnic cultural, and much more....

By joining the 2nd European Ecotourism Conference you can be part of the driving force for ecotourism in Europe, while also experiencing some of the most exciting ecotourism offers in the Carpathians, in the heart of Transylvania.

For more details and in order to register, please visit our website: www.european-ecotourism.eu. You can also keep up with Conference news through the event's [Facebook page](#).

We look forward to seeing you in Poiana Brasov!



ECOLNET Workshop in Tartu

by Lea Sudakova

The web community participated in the Ecolnet seminar worldwide in a sustainable manner

Ecolnet Project's 2nd International Workshop was held in Tartu, Estonia on 29th June 2012. The Workshop had an international character, since it was broadcast live via the internet. The recording of the broadcast can be viewed by [following this link](#). The virtual participants were able to interact with the Project team and the participants in Tartu via twitter. The tweets have been recorded and can be read them by [following this link](#).

The workshop was attended by the Ecolnet partners, the participants of 11th Summer Academy of Euracademy Association, nature based tourism students of Estonian University of Life Sciences, Estonian ecotourism providers and other stakeholders.

During the morning session, the participants discussed the implementation of the Project, the European Ecotourism Labeling Standard (EETLS), the structure of the online E-Learning Packages and the

role of the sustainable tourism Portal destinet.eu.



During the afternoon session, the floor was given to Estonian Ecotourism stakeholders. "Estonia - the Natural Way" a national quality standard, Soomaa a member of PAN Parks, bird watching activities, tourism E-marketing and the connection between social media and tourism in protected areas were presented and discussed.



After the official part of the workshop was over, the group of participants had a trip on an Estonian barge along the Emajõgi (Mother river) to downtown Tartu. During that lovely evening we felt that everything is possible through teamwork - even playing Vivaldi Four seasons on zither in ensemble after 5 minutes of training!

Piloting the E-tools and E-Learning Packages

The piloting phase of the ECOLNET Project started in November 2012, aiming to test the friendliness and effectiveness of the online evaluation tools and Learning Packages with associations and businesses in the ecotourism field, including quality certification agencies.

The piloting is still going on!

A big „THANK YOU“ to the tourism businesses who helped us with the piloting of the e-evaluation tools so far!

Below is a list of some of these businesses

The Netherlands:

La Bianchina
<http://www.labianchina.com/>



Thyencamp Camping
<http://www.thyencamp.nl/>



NatuurlijkBUITEN
www.natuurlijkbuiten.nl/



Zerofield
www.zerofield.nl



Spain:

<http://soyecoturista.com/>



Europarques
www.europarques.com



Hotel l'Algadir
www.hotelalgadirdelta.com



www.cerrodeshijar.com
 Hotel Cerro de Hajar



Asdon Aventura
www.asdonaventura.com



Fundacion DONANA 21
<http://www.donana.es/>



Italy:

Four Seasons Natura e Cultura
www.viagginaturaecultura.it



ICEA
www.icea.info



Tracceverdi
www.tracceverdi.it



Parks.it
www.parks.it



Hotel Punta Negra
www.hotelpuntanegra.co.uk



Greece:

2407
www.2407m.com



Cherryland
www.cherryland.gr



Eleonas
www.eleonashotel.gr



Eumelia
www.eumelia.com



Axios Delta National Park
www.axiosdelta.gr



Skinos Ilivatos Boutique Eco Villa
<http://www.skinos-ilivatos.gr>

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