



# EEN Newsletter Issue 4

September 2013

VISIT [WWW.ECOTOURISM-NETWORK.EU](http://WWW.ECOTOURISM-NETWORK.EU) AND JOIN THE EEN ON [ECOLNET.NING.COM](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.ecotourism-network.eu)



## Towards an Ecotourism brand for the Mediterranean: the MEET project

by Luca Santarossa, Paolo Pigliacelli, Federparchi - Europarc Italy

"MEET - Mediterranean Experience of Eco-Tourism" is a 3-year long project funded by ENPI-CBC Mediterranean Basin 2007-2013 Programme, that has granted a budget of about 5 Million € to nine Institutions from six Mediterranean countries.

The project partnership is led by Federparchi - Europarc Italy (the Federation of Italian Protected Areas) and it involves some of the main environment conservation-related policy makers in the region: Lazio Region for Italy, Association of National Parks for France, Cataluña Region for Spain, Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency for Egypt, Royal Society for



Conservation of Nature for Jordan and Al Shouf Cedar National Park for Lebanon. MedPAN (the network of Marine Protected Areas of the Mediterranean) and the "Med office" of IUCN are also members of the project partnership.

The project aims to develop an integrated strategy to settle an Eco-Tourism planning model for the Natural Parks in the Mediterranean region, model that boosts a better seasonal distribution of tourism flows and establishes a stable cooperation among the Protected Areas, in order to contribute to the design of the Mediterranean basin as a unique destination for ecotourism.

The project starts from the long lasting experience of the "European Charter for Sustainable Tourism" (ECST), already developed in EU-located Parks by Europarc (European Federation of Protected Areas) but intends to make a step ahead in this respect, adapting this approach to the Mediterranean features, and contributing to better design (and differentiate) the Ecotourism among the other nature-based tourism products (Sustainable Tourism, Responsible Tourism, Community-based Tourism, etc.).

The activities started with the design of an Ecotourism participatory-based planning process concept to be implemented in the Mediterranean countries. The project partnership is now defining the criteria for the Pilot Actions: during 2014 at least two Parks for each of the 10 involved countries (Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Spain, and Tunisia) will start up an Ecotourism planning process which shall have as final output an Ecotourism package. Such packages - from the 20 Protected Areas - will be tested with the relevant tourism targets and will be finally assessed by the project partnership, in order to be part of the "MEET ecotourism offer". A Secretariat (managed by IUCN-Med) will define the trading conditions with previously identified Tour Operators of selected markets like USA, Canada, Australia and Japan.

At the same time in each involved Park a tourism-related SMEs cluster on Ecotourism, involving local economic operators, will be settled, in order to enable the local actors to develop new ecotourism businesses. The last challenge of the project is to set up a "Mediterranean Ecotourism Planning Scheme", i.e. a formal cross-border agreement for cooperating in Ecotourism development, signed by the main Natural Parks-related policy making Institutions of the participating countries, involved in the "Advisory Panel on Ecotourism".

We believe that, since the project MEET analyzes tourism activities in protected areas with a scientific approach based on local experience, it will update the actual know-how of managing and promoting eco-tourism and will bring a significant contribution to the new policies mentioned in many public acts for sustainable development in Mediterranean. Ecotourism in protected areas can become a flagship for policies of economic and social sustainability, as well as renew the alliance between Man and Nature.

### EEN & ECOLNET ACTIVITIES

## ECOLNET Workshop in Spain: European Ecotourism Network and "Ecotourism in Spain" Club

by Virginia Torralba

More than 70 people attended the **European Ecotourism Network** and the "**Ecotourism in Spain**" Club presentation, took place in Madrid on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> June. **TUREBE**, an **Innovative Business Group** focused on the technological and sustainable development of Spanish Ecotourism Destinations, also presented the new website of *Ecotourist in Spain*

([www.ecotouristspain.com/](http://www.ecotouristspain.com/)), as a member of this European Ecotourism Network.



The workshop had a good representation of multiple actors involved in the creation and promotion of sustainable tourism products that value the natural heritage of Spain: tourism business, public administration, local action groups, NGOs, agencies travel and tour operators, and so on. It is worthy to note the participation of **Ricardo Blanco Portillo** (Head of Sustainable Tourism in TURESPAÑA -Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism-), **Carlos Erce** (Director of Tourism and Commerce, Government of Navarra), **M<sup>a</sup> Encarnación Rico** (Head of Marketing Service at National Geographic Information Center - National Geographic Institute), **Víctor Gutiérrez López** (Coordinator of Projects and LIFE+ at Fundación Biodiversidad), **Daniel Serrano Gadea** (Head of Conservation Strategies and Plans Service at Ministry of Agriculture, Alimentation and Environment), **Gemma Miralles** (Content Manager at SEGITTUR), **Amanda Guzmán** (Coordinator of Projects at ECOTONO as European Network of Ecotourism partner), **Isabel Sánchez Tejado** (President of TUREBE) and other agencies and entities as PEFC España, SEO BirdLife, EcoWildlife Travel, etc. All the participants unanimously supported the initiatives that were presented as the umbrella that will offer quality ecotourism products.

The meeting was well received by the participants, as reflected in the evaluation surveys, and was covered by various media means such as: EFE Verde, Sustainable Rural Development Magazine and Quercus Magazine amongst others. More information - in Spanish - is available here:

<http://soyecoturista.com/2013/06/28/presentacion-ree-y-club-ecoturismo-espana/>



## 2<sup>nd</sup> European Ecotourism Conference

by Andrei Blumer

**When?** October 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> 2013

**Where?** Poiana Brasov, Romania

We have the pleasure of inviting you to the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Ecotourism Conference on October 23-25<sup>th</sup> 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 culture, and much more...

By joining the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](http://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 Athens

by Elina Sarantou

The 5<sup>th</sup> Workshop of the ECOLNET Project, entitled 'The Future of Ecotourism in Greece: the Contribution of a Labeling Standard' was realized in Athens, on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2013.

The Workshop was attended by key stakeholders in the fields of agrotourism and ecotourism, from all the various types of key areas, who discussed both the problems regarding the development of Ecotourism in Greece, as well as potential solutions.

The Workshop was attended by several of the piloting businesses participating in the ECOLNET Project, members of the Greek Tourism Council, representatives from the Ministry of Agricultural Development and the Ministry of Environment, members of the Hellenic Union of Agrotourism, NGOs' active in the field of Environmental

Conservation such as WWF and Birdlife Greece, representatives from Management Bodies of Protected Areas, ecotourism businesses, cooperatives in the ecotourism field, as well as representatives of national Media amongst others.



Each of the presenters, all active in the fields of agrotourism and ecotourism, outlined their activities and interests in the field of ecotourism, developing their perennial experience with both the positive and negative aspects of these in Greece.

The Workshop ended on an extremely hopeful and positive note by concluding that this was a first of many more meetings to come within the framework of the creation of a Working Group that would further elaborate on the problems outlined, find solutions and strive to enforce them.

More information on the National Workshop can be found here: <http://ecotourism-network.eu/en-new-events/en-ecen-workshops/item/208-5th-workshop-in-athens>

## 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 in its final stages: the results are being gathered, conclusions made, and revisions on the way!

If you are an ecotourism business and are interested in examining whether you could comply with the European Ecotourism Labelling Standard, please do not hesitate to share this interest with us!

You may read more about this on our Online Community here: <http://ecolnet.ning.com/page/eetls>

Email: Elina Sarantou:  
[e.sarantou@prismanet.gr](mailto:e.sarantou@prismanet.gr)

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

Below follows a list with some of these businesses!

**The Netherlands:**

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



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



NatuurlijkBUITEN  
[www.natuurlijkbuiten.nl/](http://www.natuurlijkbuiten.nl/)



Zerofield  
[www.zerofield.nl](http://www.zerofield.nl)



**Spain:**

<http://soyecoturista.com/>



Europarques  
[www.europarques.com](http://www.europarques.com)



[www.cerrodehijar.com](http://www.cerrodehijar.com)  
 Hotel Cerro de Hajar



Asdon Aventura  
[www.asdonaventura.com](http://www.asdonaventura.com)



Hotel l'Algadir  
[www.hotelalgairdelta.com](http://www.hotelalgairdelta.com)



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



**Italy:**

Four Seasons Natura e Cultura  
[www.viagginaturaecultura.it](http://www.viagginaturaecultura.it)



ICEA  
[www.icea.info](http://www.icea.info)



Parks.it  
[www.parks.it](http://www.parks.it)



Hotel Punta Negra  
[www.hotelpuntanegra.co.uk](http://www.hotelpuntanegra.co.uk)



Tracceverdi  
[www.tracceverdi.it](http://www.tracceverdi.it)



**Greece:**

2407  
[www.2407m.com](http://www.2407m.com)



Cherryland  
[www.cherryland.gr](http://www.cherryland.gr)



Eleonas  
[www.eleonashotel.gr](http://www.eleonashotel.gr)



Eumelia  
[www.eumelia.com](http://www.eumelia.com)



Axios Delta National Park  
[www.axiosdelta.gr](http://www.axiosdelta.gr)



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

## Germany

The Austrian Ecolabel  
<http://www.umweltzeichen.at>



Stolperhof Accommodation  
<http://www.viabono.de/Hotels/StolperhofStolpeaufUsedom.aspx>

Villa Weissing  
<http://www.viabono.de/Hotels/oekopensionVillaWeissigWeissigbeiRathen.aspx>

European Culture Park Bliesbruck  
<http://www.europaeischer-kulturpark.de>

## PUBLICATION

# European Ecotourism Network Newsletter

[www.ecotourism-network.eu](http://www.ecotourism-network.eu)

Published by the ECOLNET partnership

Editing: Elina Sarantou, PRISMA

Text contributions by:

Andre Blumer, AER

Amanda Guzman, ECOTONO

Victoria Torralba, ECOTONO

Luca Santarossa, EUROPARC Italy

Paolo Pigliacelli, EUROPARC Italy

Photos:

Zoltan Kun, Pan Parks

All rights reserved

European Ecotourism Network, 2013

Project Nr: 143418-LLP-12008-1-GR-KA3-KA3NW

With the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme, Key Activity 3, ICT of the European Union



This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

