

Corsica welcome MOMAr I Interregional event

- The meeting gathered heritage experts from six rural areas of Europe to exchange experiences on management models.
- Good and bad practices in heritage management were cases of study during the scientific agenda

March 2020- The European programme **MOMAr (Models of Management for Singular Rural Heritage)** held its **first interregional meeting on the island of Corsica**, France. The main objective was to generate an exchange of experiences in the field of heritage management models, within the framework of efficiency, sustainability and demographic fragility. But also, to learn about the Corsican territory and the particularities of the island's cultural and natural heritage, as a partner of the programme.

With this purpose, on March 10th and 11th, 23 experts in heritage and representatives of the European territories involved in the project as partners and stakeholders met in Corsica. They were the **Provincial Government of Zaragoza** (Spain), the **Territorial Administrative Unit of Mehedinti County** (Romania), the **Province of Groningen** (the Netherlands), the **Ministry of Regional Development and Transport of Saxony-Anhalt** (Germany), and as hosts, the authorities of the **Corsican Region**. Unfortunately, the representatives of the **Regional Development Agency of South Bohemian** (Czech Republic) were unable to attend due to health restrictions for the coronavirus crisis.

Exchange of Experience

The scientific programme of the conference allowed to analyse both good and bad practices in the management of heritage related to monumental ensembles, intangible assets and areas linked to episodes, memory or historical figures. All the territories presented their local experiences and shared with the group of experts their success stories but also their doubts and conclusions about failed models, in order to learn together from mistakes and generate new synergies and models throughout the European context.

During the first session, the participants shared different best practices. To begin, professor Elles Bulder from **Groningen University**, presented the recovery process of old churches and traditional farms, which has been carried out in the Dutch territory, giving them new uses and a new life while preserving their authenticity. From Saxony-Anhalt area, the project manager, Fiene Grieger, explained the successful cases of the **Route of the Romanesque**, one of the 10 most popular tourist routes in Germany, connecting 88 selected buildings from the Romanesque era "as contemporary witnesses to a groundbreaking epoch of German and European history in the Middle Ages", as the expert told. Besides, Grieger

presented **the Garden Dreams** Association, a network of 50 historic parks and gardens whose main goal is to restore and maintain its historic assets, improving their attractiveness to tourists and the economic sustainability of the parks, among others goals.

Corsica delegation expounded the '**Estru Paisanu**' project, which seeks the preservation of the ancestral sounds and music of the island of Corsica recording people's voices from all the territory. For its part, the project manager of **Mehedinti County Council**, Alexandra Varzan, explained the case of a young Romanian woman who, through an entrepreneurial project, has managed to save the magnificent embroideries traditionally made by the women of Mehedinti. She achieved to turn them back into modern pieces of clothing, as well as to involve the community giving work to women from the area.

The representative of the province of Zaragoza, Isabel Soria, presented the work carried out in the **old town of Belchite** and the effort to recover the memory of one of the main cultural references in the province. Finally, Soria explained the case of **Fuendetodos**, the birthplace of Francisco de Goya, where the council has managed to attract local and foreign public with a new and alternative offer within the immense tourist attractions related to the famous painter. Furthermore, it was presented the work of **Fundación Territorio Mudéjar**, an association from Zaragoza and stakeholder of MOMAr, whose main objective is to create and to strength a collaborative management network for the use of historical-artistic means linked to the important Mudéjar heritage of the province.

Regarding bad practices, on the second day and through their experiences, the participants identified some of the most common problems that managers and public administrations encounter, such as difficulties in project financing, property disputes or the difficulty in heritage maintenance tasks, in addition to the prevailing need for technological and architectural innovation.

Corsica, cultural and historical heritage

The Corsica Region was chosen to start the round of interregional meetings that will take place until 2022, and in which the members of MOMAr will visit all the territories involved to learn first-hand about their heritage and, more important, diversity on models of management. In this case, the scientific sessions were complemented by different visits to places of special cultural and historical interest, as an example of the great heritage of Corsican island, but also it was highlighted the difficulties for management, precisely because of the large volume of goods available.

On the first day of the meeting, the local authorities offered a visit to the **Corsican Heritage Conservation and Restoration Center** in the city of Calvi, in which the attending experts were able to observe the facilities and methods used for the restoration of works of art, mainly religious. Later, they traveled to the city of Corte, in the center of the island, where they visited the space where **Corsica Museum and the Citadel** are located. This space was shown as a great example of the restoration programme, through an ambitious action plan that will last 5 years, which

aims not only to restore the old military compound but to give the city a cultural value that complements the current tourist offer, focused in active and sports tourism.

The last activity was a guided tour at the **Museum and Archaeological site of Aleria**. Here the participants discovered the restoration work that is being carried out in the Greek and Roman ruins of the place, complemented by a total renovation of the museum exhibition with original pieces from the very same archaeological site. As the responsible of the project said: "This is a work not only of restoration but to recover the historical memory that intends to give value the identity of the Corsican people through their past".

About MOMAr

Models of Management for Singular Rural Heritage (MOMAr) is an Interreg Europe programme funded by European Union. MOMAr means providing strategic thinking to the use of cultural and natural resources. The project highlights the existence of territories with problems - depopulation, ageing, no use of resources- whose identity is however marked by a rich heritage, exceptional in some cases - UNESCO heritage - and whose management entities have either not finished defining their models of action in terms of cultural and natural resources or directly borrowed models that do not correspond to the territorial reality.

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