

## Developing Spiritual Tourism for Youngsters, the Spirit-Youth exemple

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Spiritual tourism was coined from an academic standpoint only recently, probably because the word spiritual is difficult to define and the label can therefore include different types of supply. Spiritually motivated tourists are an emerging niche (Aulet, Vidal-Casellas, & Crous, 2015). According to UNTWO estimates, around 330 million tourists visit the main religious sites each year, spiritual motivation being one of the most important reasons for this (Lanquar, 2007). Bywater (1994) also mentioned that spiritual travel occupies an important segment of international tourism and has been growing steadily.

SPIRIT-Youth is a COSME project (COSME-TOUR-2015-3-04) funded by the European Commission's Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME). The SPIRIT-Youth project is a proposal for stimulating tourism mobility among young people out of season via spiritual tourism. In this paper presents the results of the pilot test.

The idea of the project is to offer a transnational spiritual tourism product to attract mainly but not only the youth tourism market. The product consists of an itinerary across several European countries, with the common theme of spirituality, understood in a global sense; that includes religious sites and religious motivations. Each region participating in the project (Limburg, Prato and Catalonia) identified a minimum of 10 activities related to Spiritual Tourism and a pilot test was carried out.

Each region hosted a group of 25 youngsters testing the activities and giving their feedback. They had a "travel diary" to note down their experiences and later provide feedback on the tested products and answered some questionnaires.

With the results of the pilot test we are able to analyse their concept about spiritual tourism activities, the things to improve or to change in the activities proposed... The aim is to develop guidelines for the creation of spiritual tourism products for youngsters.

**Key Words :** Spiritual Tourism, European Project, Youth market, product development, visitor experience

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