

## **A selection of “green” certifications for the Italian partners**

In order to more strongly foster the tourism sector and directly involve the local operators in the Italian and Croatian regions participating in the project Take it slow - Smart and Slow Tourism Supporting Adriatic Heritage for Tomorrow, the focus of Activity 3.4. *Promotion and implementation of green certification/ecolabel for SMEs, products* is on identifying a number of “green certifications” to be assigned to 10 SMEs, or products, or services of excellence in the coastal area between Italy and Croatia. A way of promoting smart and slow tourism to enhance and promote the Adriatic region as a green and slow tourist destination accessible - throughout the year - in the Mediterranean region, based on a common natural and cultural heritage.

To discuss the existing options the Italian partners can provide the tourism operators in their contexts, the 4 Italian regions involved in the activity, namely Abruzzo, Veneto, Emilia Romagna and Puglia, met via an online meeting hosted by the Abruzzo Region on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The Abruzzo Region, coordinated by Paola di Salvatore, is responsible for leading the activity for the Italian side, with the task to take the involved Italian regions by the hand along the process, jointly with the Lead Partner, the Dubrovnik-Neretva Region, in charge of guiding the activity at level of the Croatian partners.

The meeting of the Italian representatives was a significant step in terms of sharing and networking, and concluded positively. All the representatives of the Italian partner regions agreed upon the importance that each regional territory selects the certifications with the highest added value according to the types of excellences existing in their own fabric, so that all sectors are included, thus sowing the project’s “seeds” in the most proactive way possible, at the advantage of local enterprises.

In particular, each Italian region has selected the following certifications which are the most suitable for their territories.

### **Abruzzo Region**

The Abruzzo Region fosters the creation of a network of accommodation facilities and complementary services capable of promoting the development and qualification of the cycling offer, called “Abruzzo Bike Friendly”. The “Abruzzo Bike Friendly” regional network is an initiative whose primary objective is to raise the quality level of the experience tourists are offered to live in the regional territory. The creation of this network aims to create a permanent collaboration between tour (and non tour) operators, so to be able to build a competitive tourist product in the field of cycle tourism and road and off-road cycling. Two are the labels the stakeholders can achieve according to the level of qualified services delivered to tourists, “Abruzzo Bike Friendly Standard” and “Abruzzo Bike Friendly Superior”.

### **Emilia Romagna Region**

The Emilia-Romagna Region endorses “Terrabici by Emilia-Romagna”, the regional network of accommodation facilities and complementary services capable of promoting the development and qualification of the cycle tourism offer. “Terrabici by Emilia-Romagna” regional network is an initiative promoted by “APT Servizi” (the Regional Agency for Tourism Promotion) and its primary objective is to raise the quality level of the experience offered to tourists. The network’s members provide a service that allows tourists to really enjoy the most beautiful scenic places, hear stories about them and appreciate a pleasant cycle tour during which they can relax, have fun and learn. The “Terrabici” label has three levels of incremental standards that each accommodation facility has to meet, namely “1 BICI” that requires a good qualified level of sustainable services; “2 BICI”, the accommodation facilities have to offer additional services; “3 BICI” requires a fully qualified service.

### **Veneto Region**

The Veneto Region has selected the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (CETS), a methodological tool and a certification that allows for better management of protected areas for the development of sustainable tourism. The core element of the Charter is the collaboration between all interested parties to develop a common strategy and action plan for tourism development, based on an in-depth analysis of the local situation. The objective is the protection of the natural and cultural heritage and the continuous improvement of tourism management in the protected area in favour of the environment, the local population, enterprises, and visitors. The chance is that the certification could be achieved in the area of the Colli Euganei park.

### **Teatro Pubblico Pugliese**

Teatro Pubblico Pugliese - Consorzio per le Arti e la Cultura intends to embark on a path to quantify the ecological carbon footprint concerning the stakeholders operating in the micro-tourist destination of Capitolo-Torre Canne - Selva di Fasano, located along the Via Francigena - Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe. It will aim at obtaining the “Vie Francigene label” on the basis of a Carbon Neutrality protocol of the identified micro destination, thus creating a network of both public and private services, which are inter-related, and enhance and foster the typical products and the heritage of the Via Francigena in an ecologically sustainable way.