

Cultural & Creative Tourism as a Catalyst for Sustainable Development in EU Rural Areas



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This paper explores the crucial role of cultural and creative tourism (CCT) as a catalyst for sustainable development in rural areas of the European Union. Rural areas often face challenges such as population decline, economic stagnation, and environmental degradation. CCT, by leveraging cultural heritage, creative industries, and local communities, emerges as a promising strategy to address these challenges and foster sustainable development.

The paper analyzes the potential of CCT to generate new economic opportunities, preserve and promote cultural heritage, enhance social cohesion, and protect the environment in rural areas. It also examines challenges and limitations associated with CCT development, such as limited access to funding, and the need for adequate training and skills development.

A particular focus will be given to the TOURAL project, which focuses on the development of CCT in rural and remote areas of the Adriatic-Ionian and Black Sea regions. TOURAL proposes a multi-dimensional, participatory, and integrated model to support tourism development, addressing complementary tourism verticals and co-designing policies and tourism offerings.

The paper will conclude by offering suggestions for policies and strategies that can be adopted at the EU and national levels to strengthen CCT and maximize its contribution to the sustainable development of rural areas.

Keywords: Cultural and creative tourism, sustainable development, rural areas, European Union, cultural heritage, creative industries, TOURAL.

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Biography:

Dionisis Asimiadis is a PhD candidate in Political Science. He was born in 1996 in Thessaloniki. He has worked for a long time as a radio and television producer and on major projects of the European Union. He graduated from the Department of Social Administration and Political Science and Law at Democritus University of Thrace, and he postgraduate studies specialize in European Policies, the design, and management of European Programs. He has been honored with the Second National Prize for Language Essay by the Eleftherios Venizelos Foundation and the Second Prize for Poetry by the Union of Writers of Northern Greece. In 2022, he has been published the book "Aspects of Greek Radicalism in the 19th Century."