

Authentic Europe Network Structure and Regulation

Background and Objectives

The Authentic Europe Network has been established within the framework of the “Authentic Europe” project, co-funded by the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Union, Strand 2 Democratic engagement and civic participation: Encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level. Measure: Networks of Towns.

The project’s main objective is to create a sustainable Network of small municipalities with little experience at European level in order to facilitate international cooperation and exchange of good practices among them in the field of rural tourism. More specifically the project aims are:

- to encourage a fuller exploitation of the existing natural and cultural resources in the rural areas, encompassing folk arts (music, dance, and rituals), ethnography, customs, traditional food and beverage, handicrafts, natural healing practices etc.;
- to introduce tools and methods for effective networking to stakeholders;
- to promote sustainability, competitiveness and respect of local identities; to reinforce the sense of European citizenship by strengthening the relations between European local communities.

The target groups are: public authorities, citizens; youth; seniors; small and medium businesses; cultural and tourism organizations from the participating regions.

Ethos:

The Network will be non-party in politics and non-sectarian in religion and will be fully committed to a policy of equal opportunity to all irrespective of gender, class, creed, disability or ethnic background.

Membership:

The Network is comprised by its founding members and partners in the Authentic Europe project:

Municipality of Strumyani, Bulgaria
Municipality of Agia, Greece
SODEBUR, Spain
ANCI Sardegna, Italy
Naxxar Local Council, Malta.



The Network membership is free of charge.

The accession of new members is discussed and approved by the founding members after the new candidates express their interest for joining the Network in written through the Network website, or through the contact persons appointed by each founding member.

The membership in the Network is open to local and regional authorities with predominantly rural territories, interested in developing their territories as tourist destinations, and willing to abide the regulations and obligations listed in this document.

Rights and obligations of the Network members:

The network members have agreed upon the following obligations:

- To promote the Network in national and international events, forums, fairs, etc.;
- To work towards the achievement of the Network objectives and contribute to the development of the Network and its members;
- To continue to actively engage the local communities into the development of the Authentic Europe policies, actions and services;
- To contribute to the development of the Authentic Europe Network through fundraising activities, development and implementation of projects and programs of common interest;
- To participate in the annual meeting of the Network via personal attendance of a representative or through electron means, such as skype;
- To inform the rest of the partners of any changes in the legal circumstances if the institution/ organization they represent;
- To provide access to information and materials related to the Authentic Europe Network to citizens, stakeholders and other interested parties;

- The Authentic Europe Network members have the right to use and reuse the common policies, strategies and material developed by the Network in their local/ regional context, as long as the Authentic Europe Network name is mentioned and the Network's contribution acknowledged;

- To promote the other members' rural tourist sites and attractions as part of the Network;

- To engage with other Network members in additional activities for extending the collaboration among different stakeholders in the Network through:
 - Business partnerships
 - Joint rural tourism products, initiatives, campaigns
 - Joint promotional initiatives
 - Joint projects in the fields of education, tourism, culture, active ageing, citizenship or other fields or topics of common interest



The final goal of this Network is:

To create a stable network of local communities aiming at fostering communication, mutual understanding, development of European values and identities, providing for the common development of rural tourism policies and services and thus bringing the European communities closer.

The participation in the network shall be in a spirit of cooperation, friendship and common sharing of experiences and objectives, supporting the wellbeing of the European citizens.