

**HUMANITA**

**NEWSLETTER**

August 2023



**DEAR STAKEHOLDERS,**

with this newsletter, we will start a series of newsletters with the purpose of presenting our longstanding work and effort in addressing the human-nature interactions and impacts of tourist activities on protected areas. Our goal is to show you what we have been doing in this regard until now, and what we expect to achieve in the future. With this newsletter, we want to invite you to join us on this road and jump with us into the sphere of research and development in order to create a better world, a healthier and protected environment, and a brighter future. We hope you will enjoy this issue of the newsletter, and we invite you to contact us for all and any questions you may have.

Namely, it was identified that with a growing number of visitors and visitor activities, protected areas in Central Europe experience an increase of human-nature conflicts. Recreational activities like hiking, mountain biking or skiing lead to various environmental impacts on physical and hydrological processes, as well as on ecology and wildlife. Having this in mind, scientists and professionals from five (5) countries in the European Union decided to address this challenge and its solutions using a scientific and methodical approach.

**WITH THAT BEING SAID, WE ARE EXCITED TO INVITE YOU TO A NEW ADVENTURE IN SAFEGUARDING THE ENVIRONMENT WHILE CONTRIBUTING TO ENSURING A SMART AND RESPONSIBLE TOURISM AND LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

After much time, effort, preparation and passion dedicated to this initiative, we are happy to announce that the INTERREG Central Europe project “**HUMANITA - Human-Nature Interactions and Impacts of Tourist Activities on Protected Areas**” officially started on **April 1st 2023**, and will finish in **March 31st 2026**.

Within this time, the HUMANITA project will bring together **11 partners from Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Italy and Slovakia** with the purpose of engaging scientists with specific expertise and thematic experience to work together to develop and test innovative solutions to assess the impact of tourist activities on nature, with the objective to assist managers of protected areas to safeguard the environment. Additional **14 associated partners** are involved in the project to contribute to the management of human-nature interactions and impacts of tourist activities on protected areas.

THE HUMANITA ECOSYSTEM IS CONSISTED OF THE FOLLOWING HIGH QUALITY AND RENOWNED PROJECT PARTNERS:

#### LEAD PARTNER

1. University of Žilina, Slovakia (UNIZA)

#### PROJECT PARTNERS AND PILOT SITES

2. Eurac research (EURAC), Italy
3. University of Parma (UNIPR), Italy
4. Notitia Ltd (NOTITIA), Croatia
5. Carinthia UAS - non-profit limited liability company (CUAS), Austria
6. CEEweb for Biodiversity (CEEweb), Hungary
7. EGTC GEOPARK KARAWANKEN/KARAVANKE (EGTC GEOPARK), Austria/Slovenia - pilot site
8. Administration of National Park Malá Fatra (A-NPMF), Slovakia - pilot site
9. Public Institution Kamenjak (PIK), Croatia - pilot site
10. Tuscan-Emilian Apennine National Park (PNATE), Italy - pilot site
11. Bükk National Park Directorate (BNPD), Hungary - pilot site

#### 14 ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

The importance and impact of the initiative behind the HUMANITA project was recognized by the European Union as well. This project is supported by the **Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme 2021-2027** with co-financing from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) - the project's total budget is **2,396,346.70 EUR**, of which the ERDF funding amounts to **1,917,077.36 EUR**.

#### »»» PROJECT AIMS

To ensure its importance, impact and long-term sustainability, the HUMANITA project aims to:

- Test and produce innovative solutions to assess the impact of tourist activities on nature
- Assist managers of protected areas (PA) to optimize them with nature protection
- Involve tourists and local communities in participatory monitoring to bring awareness-raising, trust-building, and behavioural change
- Enhance the protection of natural heritage, ecosystems, and valuable areas
- Develop “common heritage” narrative for pilot sites.

These changes will be introduced and achieved through the project's key thematic activities, from monitoring of environmental impacts of tourists inside PAs, current methods and best practices, and developing innovative monitoring methods and data sets to detect environmental impacts of tourists, to human-nature conflict management.

Following its activities, the project will result with the following **KEY OUTPUTS**:

- **1 TRANSNATIONAL MONITORING STRATEGY**
- **5 PILOT ACTIONS TESTING NEW INNOVATIVE MONITORING METHODS AND APPROACHES**
- **5 LOCAL ACTION PLANS TO MONITOR AND RESOLVE HUMAN-NATURE CONFLICTS IN PILOT SITES**
- **6 SOLUTIONS ASSESSING THE IMPACT VALUE OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF TOURIST ACTIVITIES ON NATURE.**



## ➤➤➤ KICK START 17-19. April 2023

The project kick-started with its first consortium and kick-off meeting on 17-19 April 2023 in **Bukkszentkereszt in Hungary**. The meeting served as a platform for discussing the work packages, activities, tasks and overall workflow of partners in the following period, as well as in the project in general. The kick-off meeting also integrated the establishment of the HUMANITA Steering Group, and Steering Committee meeting, the first of many that will follow in the HUMANITA project.

## GOOD-PRACTICE WORKSHOP ON "MONITORING VISITORS AND THEIR IMPACTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT"

One of the first achievements in the project was successfully realised on **June 29th 2023**, when an inspiring event took place - the Good-Practice Workshop on "Monitoring Visitors and their Impacts on the Environment". This online workshop aimed to shed light on the monitoring of spatiotemporal behaviour of visitors and explore innovative technologies for monitoring the impacts of visitors on the natural environment. The event was an inspiration, featuring presentations from eight (8) good-practice owners and covering a range of topics related to visitor monitoring, wildlife monitoring, erosion and trampling monitoring. The presentations covered the insights into the use of modern technologies like acoustic sensors, wildlife cameras and UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) to monitor the impact of visitors on the environment. Furthermore, the modern possibilities of data collection about visitor movement patterns based on voluntary geographic information from mobile apps and automatic visitor counters, were a great inspiration. The workshop's themes closely align with the monitoring methods that will be employed during the HUMANITA project. By exploring the latest technological advancements and successful case studies, participants gained valuable inspiration and knowledge that will contribute to the project's objectives, such as enhancing sustainable tourism practices and minimizing the negative environmental impacts of visitor activities.

Conclusively, in this project, we have gathered an impressive consortium of scientific project partners and pilot sites.

## LEAD PARTNER - UNIVERSITY OF ŽILINA (UNIZA)

Our Lead partner, University of Žilina (UNIZA), with 70 years of history, belongs to one of leading educational and scientific institutions in Slovakia, and is currently involved in nearly 200 national and 65 international scientific projects. UNIZA assumed the overall financial and administrative responsibility for the project and coordination of the implementation of the project, while also participating in the implementation of all project activities, such as detecting environmental/biotic/abiotic variables using different approaches using also land and remote technics (e.g. LIDAR, photogrammetry), and testing their detection limits and suitability for different environments, assessing the correlations between different indicators and assisting in the preparation of the database, data collection, analysis, and interpretation.



## PROJECT PARTNERS

### EURAC RESEARCH - INSTITUTE FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (EURAC)

Eurac Research - Institute for Regional Development (EURAC) has the goal to implement transformation research, by promoting social justice, supportive and resilient communities and increasing environmentally friendly mindsets. EURAC will participate in the implementation of all project activities, especially in monitoring of environmental impacts of tourists inside PAs, current methods and best practice, developing innovative monitoring methods and data sets to detect environmental impacts of tourists, as well as to contributing to the establishment of human-nature conflict management.

Carinthia University of Applied Sciences (CUAS) is a non-profit limited liability company with the purpose of establishment, maintenance and implementation of UAS degree programs and postgraduate programs in the fields of technology, business, health and social affairs, as well as the implementation of courses for education and training. With this extensive experience and know-how, CUAS will contribute to the realization of all planned activities in the project, and together with the Karawanken-Karavanke UNESCO Global Geopark bring together local stakeholders to work out a local action plan, to monitor and resolve human-nature conflicts, and to contribute to the development of a “common heritage” narrative.

### CARINTHIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES (CUAS)

### ADMINISTRATION OF NATIONAL PARK MALÁ FATRA (A-NPMF)



Administration of National Park Malá Fatra (A-NPMF) is an independent organisation of nature protection directly subordinated under Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic, covering 40 nature reserves and other protected areas in its competence area, as well as 13 Sites of Community Importance and 1 Special Protection Area, which are part of the European network of protected areas Natura 2000. As a project partner and **pilot site**, A-NPMF will implement all project activities, include detecting environmental/biotic/abiotic variables using different approaches assessing the impact of disturbing effects by tourists (including e.g. ski mountaineering or operation of mountain chalets, and drones) on mammals and on birds of the grouse family by means of photo monitoring and telemetry, and develop tools for participatory monitoring and involve local people, stakeholders, and tourists.

University of Parma (UNIPR) is a state university, and one of the oldest universities in the world. UNIPR will join all other partners in sharing its experience and knowledge for the achievement of the set objectives, focusing on two main directions: the definition of different indicators to assess the tourist impact on studied areas, and the storage and elaboration of monitoring data sampled in each pilot site included in the project.

### UNIVERSITY OF PARMA (UNIPR)

## PROJECT PARTNERS

The EGTC GEOPARK KARAWANKEN/KARAVANKE (EGTC GEOPARK) is a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, and a cross-border region connected and divided by the mountain range of the same name, located at the border of Austria and Slovenia and marked by a very rich geological variety between the Alps and Dinarides. Karawanken-Karavanke UNESCO Global Geopark is a project partner and a **pilot site** which will be involved in all project activities. To investigate the growing demand and its impacts and associated user conflicts, Karawanken-Karavanke UNESCO Global Geopark will focus on various localities to assist managers and users in understanding the impacts of hikers and mountain bikers on hiking paths and MTB trails, define zones that are suitable for the development of recreational activities, inform visitors about the impacts of their activities and show them the necessity to respect the natural environment and stay on official paths and trails.

### EGTC GEOPARK KARAWANKEN/KARAVANKE (EGTC GEOPARK)



### NOTITIA LTD

Notitia Ltd is specialized in numerous fields, but its core area of expertise is implementation of national, EU and other international scientific and strategic projects, as well as research, development, and innovation; tourism; communication, dissemination, promotion, visibility; strategic planning; monitoring; evaluation; quality management; sustainable development; implementation of workshops, conferences and other events. Notitia is a communication manager of the project responsible for coordinating and implementing communication activities in the project and ensuring their efficiency and success. Notitia is responsible for developing the strategic outline of the communication activities in the project, as well as for implementing the project's communication activities and ensuring the deliverance of communication deliverables through monitoring and reporting of the project's progress.



### TUSCAN-EMILIAN APENNINE NATIONAL PARK (PNATE)

Tuscan-Emilian Apennine National Park (PNATE) is an Italian public body whose primary goal is the protection of natural heritage, ensuring a better life quality and the promotion of local economy and eco-sustainable tourism, including four (4) state natural reserves and 16 Natura 2000 sites, splitting into two (2) regions - Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany. As a project partner and **pilot site**, PNATE will participate in all the project activities. In particular, PNATE will implement project activities in three (3) pilot sites in the park, detecting environmental/biotic/abiotic variables using different approaches, data collection, analysis and interpretation to contribute to the development of technical tools for participatory monitoring, involving local people, stakeholders, and tourists, with the main focus of investigation in the three (3) localities on the recreational impacts of tourists on natural assets.

## PROJECT PARTNERS

Public Institution Kamenjak (PIK) manages four natural areas in the Municipality of Medulin in Croatia. As a project partner and a **pilot site**, the role of PIK is to contribute to the improvement of the sustainable management of the protected area of Lower Kamenjak and the Medulin Archipelago by developing, monitoring and testing new methods and solutions, with a focus on reducing tourism-related pressure and loss of biodiversity. In order to better understand the spatial and temporal distribution of visitors, as well as the most-affected zones, PIK's project activities will be focused on defining the areas where the impact of visitors is the most intense. In addition, through communication channels and workshops, PIK will inform visitors about the effects of their activities on the protected area and point out to them the necessity of respecting the natural environment and maintaining official paths and parking zones, with the overall aim of raising awareness, educating and reducing human-wildlife conflict.

### PUBLIC INSTITUTION KAMENJAK (PIK)



### CEEWEB FOR BIODIVERSITY (CEEWEB)

CEEweb for Biodiversity (CEEweb) is a network of 33 organisations from Central and Eastern Europe striving to conserve the natural heritage of the region, with a mission to work for biodiversity conservation through the promotion of sustainable development. CEEweb will provide its experience and collaborate with all partners for the realization of planned activities in the pilot site at the Bükk National Park together with the park's administration. Supporting the Bükk National Park Directorate, CEEweb will take part in the designing and implementation of monitoring activities and conduct desktop research and on-site data collection, and provide the analysis on it together with the Bükk NPD data collection process.



### BÜKK NATIONAL PARK DIRECTORATE (BNPD)

Bükk National Park Directorate (BNPD) is a central public administration body designated for nature protection, responsible for the nature conservation management of one (1) national park, nine (9) landscape protection areas, 14 nature conservation areas, 66 Natura 2000 areas, "ex lege" protected areas (mires, kurgans, earth fortifications, springs, caves), one (1) Ramsar, one (1) World Heritage and one (1) European Diploma of Protected Area sites in North Hungary. As a project partner and a **pilot site**, BNPD will participate in all project activities. In particular, BNPD will implement fieldwork activities, with the main focus on data collection for monitoring of environmental impacts of tourists inside protected areas, current methods and best practice, as well as developing innovative monitoring methods and data sets to detect environmental impacts of tourists and human-nature conflict management.

We are excited to share with you our progress and news that will take place in the following months, on our path to research human-nature interactions and impacts of tourist activities on protected areas, develop and test innovative solutions to assess the impact of tourist activities on nature, and to assist managers of protected areas to safeguard the environment.

**STAY WITH US FOR  
MORE INSIGHTS!**

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UNIVERSITY  
OF ŽILINA



UNIVERSITÀ  
DI PARMA



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