

## ESPERANTO AND TOURISM

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**Abstract:** *The emphasis of this article is on the history of Esperanto tourism and “Esperanto friendly” environments, towns and cities, which adjust to this language their cultural and tourist services and facilities. The UEA (Universala Esperanto-Asocio), as the umbrella organization of the Esperanto movement, also encourages such activities. Among the Esperanto friendly environments, the city of Bydgoszcz, Poland, has obtained a prestigious position by fostering a lively Esperanto movement and running a grammar school, which teaches the language. In addition, the town organizes competitions in Esperanto poetry, publishes the magazine Monda turismo and annually prepares an international exhibition of Esperanto tourism. Finally, in Bydgoszcz, there is the school of higher education Internacia Studumo pri Turismo kaj Kulturo en Bydgoszcz that has trained tourism workers in Esperanto for over twenty years. The activities of the school should serve as an encouragement to both the teachers and students of tourism how to explore new business possibilities with the assistance of the most famous planned language worldwide.*

**Keywords:** *Esperanto, tourism, the UEA, Bydgoszcz, schools for tourism*

### INTRODUCTION

Although in recent decades major and influential languages have dominated the world stage, smaller languages are gradually winning reputation and significance. On the other hand, however, many attempts have been made for centuries to create artificial, international, planned languages with a purpose of limiting the domination of major languages, which in one way or another threaten smaller, especially minority languages. The need to address this pressing language issue led in the previous century to the birth of interlinguistics, which deals among others with planned languages and which can be seen as an addition to traditional and generally accepted areas of linguistics.<sup>1</sup> Among these artificial languages, Esperanto justifiably enjoys the highest degree of attention and respect. The previous century witnessed the transformation of this language into a rich, flexible, versatile and usable medium of literary expression, as confirmed by the emergence of many original and translated works of literature. In addition, Esperanto can nowadays pride itself on a sizable number of speakers (ca. 2 million), who have at their disposal an impressive range of teaching and learning facilities: research institutions,

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<sup>1</sup> Vera Barandovska Frank: *Enkonduka lernolibro de interlingvistiko*. Akademio internacia de la sciencoj – San Marino, 1995.

extensive libraries, and schools backed by teaching aids as well as modern methodical theory and practice. This ascension of Esperanto coincides with the growing awareness of the importance of languages for individuals, groups, nations, economy, politics and culture. Sociologists and psychologists in particular are increasingly aware of the fatal consequences for both individuals and groups, especially minorities and socially marginalized people, who experienced the violation of their language rights, being consequently negatively affected in terms of educational progress, material welfare, moral confidence and self-respect.<sup>2</sup>

At this point, it is neither possible nor necessary to provide any more detailed references to the history of Esperanto and its struggle for language equality, the protection of national, and particularly the minority languages. It would be helpful, however, to reconsider the role of this language in raising the language awareness, and its contribution to the spread of linguistic culture, and finally, we should reconsider its support for multilingualism and its propaedeutic value for teaching and learning foreign languages. For such purposes, a considerable body of technical and scientific literature and information can be found on the Internet together with a number of professional and scientific works focused on the Esperanto terminology in the field of philosophy, art, law, engineering all the way to medicine, transport, trade and of course tourism.

Esperanto in tourism can be seen as a particularly popular topic this year, because the *UN* declared the year 2017 to be the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. This concern for sustainable development is part of the agenda of the *United Nations* in 2030, when tourism should be assigned a special role, as it is expected to promote sustainable economic development, full-time and productive jobs, appropriate work for all and sustainable protection of the environment. It is therefore understandable that Esperantists who are often associated with many nature-protection, social, humanitarian and peace movements adopted for their 102<sup>nd</sup> Congress in Seoul a theme focused on sustainable tourism under the slogan “*Turismo kaj evoluo: vojoj al dauripovo.*” As emphasized in the invitation to the congress by the *UEA (Universala Esperanto-Asocio)* president Mark Fettes, tourism on one hand enables the convergence of people, but on the other hand, it can also harm the environment and culture. Anyway, as suggested by Esperantists, tourism with the help of Esperanto brings people together, expanding their horizons, mutual understanding, sharpens their respect for different languages and cultures, thus contributing to the consolidation of peace.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights. Barcelona, Spain, 9 June 1996.

<sup>3</sup> UEA (Universala Esperanto-Asocio): Pri dauripova turismo en Seulo; <http://www.uea.org/gk/643a1>.

Consequently, Esperantists will take part in numerous events worldwide this year, paying the most respectful attention to the centenary of Ludwik Lejzer Zamenhof's death at the 102<sup>nd</sup> Congress of Esperanto speakers in Seoul. There the Congress of the International Federation of Teachers Esperantists (Internacia Liga de Esperantistaj instruistoj, ILEIA) will take place as well, their 50th Congress being dedicated to the theme: Education for respect for human life and nature, *Edukado al estimo de la homo kaj al respekto al la vivo kaj al la naturo*. Again, they promised in advance to address a few topics at the Congress of Teachers Esperantists, which will focus especially on the improvement of Esperanto teaching and successful work in extra-curricular activities dedicated to tourism in primary and secondary schools. Apart from that, the congress is expected to discuss the educational value of tourism, the tourism economy in Esperanto clubs, the professional education for tourism, and promote specialized tourist literature in Esperanto and even more importantly, the respect for the uniqueness of the visited destinations. Papers should be as a rule written in Esperanto, which will also be a working language at the congress.<sup>4</sup>

### **SOME VIEWS ON THE FIGHT FOR THE POSITION OF ESPERANTO IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

From the very beginnings, Esperanto was planned in such a way as to relieve linguistic distress, to promote international relations, contacts and communication. As Esperanto is a relatively easy language to master, it can serve as a means of communication among the majority of the world population, who meet and mingle at work, leisure, transport and tourism, being united in the struggle for existence, peace, human rights and dignity. These objectives are also pursued by the *UN*, the *European Council*, the *EU* and many governmental and non-governmental organizations.<sup>5</sup> Immediately after the First World War, some countries in the *League of Nations* suggested that Esperanto should become a common language for discussions in this international organization. Apart from that, they also suggested introducing this language in schools.<sup>6</sup> For the *League of Nations*, the supporters of Esperanto collected a number of encouraging data on the use of this language

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<sup>4</sup> Simpozia alvoko ILEI-Simpozio Edukado al respektolena turismo. Busano, Korea Respubliko, 20/21 julio 2017; [http://www.ilei.info/konferenco/2017/simpozia\\_alvoko\\_Busano.pdf](http://www.ilei.info/konferenco/2017/simpozia_alvoko_Busano.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Ulrich Matthias: *Esperanto - eine Chance für Europa. Wie wir Sprachbarrieren abbauen, uns gleichberechtigt verständigen und die kulturelle Vielfalt bewahren können*; <http://www.u-matthias.de/chance/chance.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> Inazo Nitobe: *Esperanto and the Language Question at the League of Nations. 1921, pp. 1-15*; [www.esperanto.ie/en/PDF\\_files/Espo\\_Leag\\_Nations.pdf](http://www.esperanto.ie/en/PDF_files/Espo_Leag_Nations.pdf).

in schools, tourism and transport in the member states of this organization.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, despite a favorable report on successful development of Esperanto in different countries, the excellent congress of Esperanto speakers, held in Prague in 1921, and the wishes of the states to use this language internationally, the French delegation prevented the use of Esperanto in the *League of Nations*. As a result, French prevailed as a working language in these environments in the interwar period. Even after the Second World War, Esperantists and numerous scientific and educational organizations gathered millions of signatures to activate the use of Esperanto in the *UN*, among other languages. That did not happen, but the global Esperanto organization *UEA* became a consultative body of the *United Nations* and *UNESCO* and takes part in all matters of language policy.<sup>8</sup>

It is also necessary to draw attention to the special role of the Esperanto movement in the context of sustainable development, mentioned in the *UN's* Agenda 21.<sup>9</sup> Numerous documents, issued by the *United Nations*, and the documents on Human Rights have been translated into Esperanto and under the patronage of the *European Council* comprehensive instructions for learning, teaching and assessing foreign languages have been published, paying considerable attention to specific European norms for evaluating language skills.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps it is strange that some teachers of English have worked hard to promote Esperanto, for example, Professor Marjorie Boulton, who translated in Esperanto many notable works of English literature and wrote the famous biography of Zamenhoff (1859-1917), the father of Esperanto.<sup>11</sup> With this planned language, Esperantists do not want to replace English or other languages, but they want to supplement them and reduce linguistic imperialism.<sup>12</sup> Esperanto has opponents especially within the ranks of economic, military, political and educational establishments who earn billions with English in the *EU* and enjoy the privileges to which they are not entitled.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Esperanto as an international auxiliary language. Report of the general Secretariat of the League of nations adopted by the third Assembly, 1922, str. 1-23; <https://archive.org/details/esperantoasinter00leagrich>.

<sup>8</sup> Esperanto kaj internaciaj organizaĵoj / *Kompilis Lee Chong-Yeong*. – Rotterdam: *UEA*, 2003. – 18 p. – (*Esperanto-Dokumentoj*, №38E). – [Donaco de *UEA*]. See also: *Biblioteko de "La Ondo de Esperanto" (BibLO) Libroj ricevitaj ekde la 1a de januaro 2003; Aktualigita je la 18a de junio 2015*; <http://esperanto-ondo.ru/Bibl-lib.htm>. Glej ŝe: Esperanto por UN, UN-inform pago por Esperantistoj, <http://www.esperantoporun.org/>.

<sup>9</sup> Sebastian Kirf: *Esperanto. Ein Beitrag zur Umsetzung der Agenda 21*. Emden, 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. A Guide for Users, Language Policy Division. Strasbourg, 2000; [https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework\\_EN.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Marjorie Boulton: *Zamenhof - Creator of Esperanto*. Oxford, 1960.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Phillipson: *Linguistic Imperialism*, Oxford Applied Linguistics. Oxford University Press, 2000.

<sup>13</sup> François Grin: *Fremdlingvo-instruado kiel publika politiko*, Geneva, 2005.

According to various estimates, the departure of Great Britain from the *EU* will very probably improve the position of Esperanto in the *EU*.<sup>14</sup> Esperanto is not an opponent of national languages, it is rather their supplement and extension, being notable for its propaedeutic value which led to the introduction of this language into many primary and high schools as well as the institutions of higher education. As we shall see, in some cases, programs for various professional schools envisaged Esperanto in their curricula. Due to its propaedeutic value, it is particularly desirable in commercial and tourism education, the topic, in which we are particularly interested in 2017,<sup>15</sup> because this year is dedicated to sustainable tourism, which can be in addition to a number of languages supported by Esperanto as well.

### SOME VIEWS ON ESPERANTO IN TOURISM

Even in its early stages, Esperanto turned out to be useful in many economic and transport activities: shipping, the post office, the telegraph, the railway and especially in trade and tourism. As confirmed by the extensive Esperanto encyclopedia, immediately after the First World War and up to the Second World War Esperanto was used in such activities as well. For example, already at the Congress of International Economics in 1905 in Mons, merchants expressed a wish for Esperanto to be taught in schools. The first commercial chamber, which officially recognized Esperanto, was located in London. In 1905 the commercial chamber mentioned above recognized the utility of Esperanto, and the following year Esperanto public exams were already prepared, which continued until 1930. The second commercial chamber, which recognized the importance of Esperanto, was stationed in Los Angeles, while in London, Esperanto was in 1912 used especially in international trade. Until the First World War in 1914, the use of Esperanto was positively evaluated by 51 French, 3 British, 7 German commercial chambers and 1 Spanish and 1 American commercial chamber respectively.

As early as 1922, an association of traders in Esperanto was founded, in 1923, they already used this language in correspondence and advertising, they issued prospectuses, and later they erected stalls in Esperanto at the exhibitions. In 1921, commercial chambers sent to the *League of Nations* a joint proposal to teach Esperanto optionally in schools of commerce. In order to accelerate the use of Esperanto in commerce, in 1923, at the initiative of the Italian and Swiss commercial chambers, an international conference on the use of an auxiliary

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<sup>14</sup> The Autarkist: Brexit and the Rise of International Language Esperanto. <https://theautarkist.wordpress.com/2016/06/25/brexit-and-the-rise-of-the-international-language-esperanto/>.

<sup>15</sup> Esperanto-kursoj en universitatoj kaj altinstitutoj, kompilinto: Germain Pirlot, Jan. 2008; <http://www.sat-amikaro.org/article1095.html>. See also: *Studado pri turismo kaj kulturo en Esperanto. Klerigejo de la Internacia Akademio de la Sciencoj*. Pollando, Bydgoszcz Januaro 2012; [stud.@esperanto-turismo.org](mailto:stud.@esperanto-turismo.org).

language in commerce was summoned in Venice, which was attended by 90 representatives of trade chambers, 8 ministers of trade and 61 commercial institutes. Esperanto was used as a working language of the conference. It was therefore suggested that Esperanto should be used at exhibitions, on the radio, in tourism, this conference in Venice, 1923, attracting notice of the *League of Nations* as well. The second conference was prepared at the Paris exhibition in 1925, which was visited by 155 commercial chambers and 100 other organizations. The conference we find particularly relevant in this context is the conference on tourism and advertising, held in 1929 at the Frankfurt Book Fair, which was among others attended by the Ministry of Trade from the Soviet Union. Even before the First World War and during both world wars, large-scale factories printed advertising brochures, organized commodity exchanges as well as holding various business conferences in Esperanto. There were also more and more exhibitions and professional conferences, where the use and position of Esperanto were reasserted. At the initiative of the *UEA* they started to issue more and more business literature in Esperanto, and this organization managed to attract a number of businessmen who were interested in communicating in this language. As the result of this successful use of Esperanto in various business activities, the critics of this language argued that Esperanto is useful only for business and tourism but not in fiction and literature. However, Esperantists by producing numerous translations of world literature and original fiction proved that this "artificial" language is a literary medium of the highest quality, which can successfully compete with any developed national language.

Teachers have greatly contributed to the expansion and deepening of Esperanto by introducing this language into schools. Teachers from different countries established in 1910 the International Federation of Teachers of Esperanto and issued *Pedagogia Revuo*, *IPR*. After the First World War, teachers were trying to heal the wounds inflicted by the First World War on the international relations, issuing an Esperanto magazine *Novaj Tempo* as well, where they fought for the rights of the teachers, endeavouring in particular to found the new school for spreading peace and Esperanto. At the congress of teachers of Esperanto in Vienna in 1924, they founded the *World Association of Teachers of Esperanto (Tutmonda Asocio de Geinstruistoj Esperantistaj - TAGE)*, which began publishing as its newsletter *Internacia Pedagogia Revuo (IPR)*, and in various countries local teachers' newsletters were issued. In 1949, teachers in the city of Bournemouth in the UK founded the similar-minded *International Federation of Teachers and Students of Esperanto, Internacia Liga de Esperantistaj Instruistoj, ILEIA*, which even nowadays publishes its traditional magazine *IPR*. This global organization of teachers of Esperanto implements various projects, summons conferences, cooperates with 60 countries and numerous Esperanto partners. *ILEI* cooperates especially with the

tourist centers, such as the School of International Tourism and Culture in Bydgoszcz, Poland, to which we will specifically refer later. German teachers-Esperantists were especially hardworking, but after the arrival of the Nazis to power they had to stop working.<sup>16</sup>

The first tourist trips and tours were organized by Esperantists even before the year 1900, this language being promoted especially by the French Touring Club, which in its many media propagated Esperanto, and later other clubs started issuing tourist newsletters and travel albums in this language, especially the Austrian railways. Tourist travels with the help of Esperanto were supported in particular by the central organization *UEA*, which for these purposes published a number of leaflets and brochures. Between the world wars, at least 400 cities published tourist guides and leaflets in Esperanto, tour guides of exceptional quality being issued by the Italian Touring Club in Milan, which in this way advertised the lakes in Lombardy, and organized international travels using Esperanto. Later in various countries, provincial tourism associations were set up and within them the Esperanto sections in Poland, Finland, Sweden, Norway were established. These countries formed specialized tourism organizations and tourism commissions, which organized many successful trips with the help of Esperanto. In 1935, they founded the *International Tourism Alliance*, which also published Esperanto tourist literature and organized cheap international travels. At the same time, the use of Esperanto rapidly developed at the post offices and railways.

With the rise of Nazism, fascism and other dictatorships, the Esperanto movement in Europe due to the persecution of Esperantists was declining rapidly.<sup>17</sup> After the Second World War, the Esperanto movement in Western countries quickly recovered, in Eastern Europe more slowly, but in Yugoslavia authorities were always in favour of Esperanto.<sup>18</sup> The Cold War, together with the growing distrust between the states and nations, also impeded the development of tourism and the cooperation between nations and states, all of which was detrimental to the Esperanto movement. Therefore, among others the *UEA* also tried to mitigate these dangerous post-war tensions, with the assistance of national Esperanto societies, being assisted in its endeavours by youth and other peace movements. Esperantists attended world congresses, spread Esperanto literature and within the *UEA*, they also strengthened the *World Tourism Organization* and its national units. After *perestroika*, the collapse of socialism in several European countries and the formation of the

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<sup>16</sup> Internacia Ligo de esperantistaj Instruistoj; [https://eo.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internacia\\_Ligo\\_de\\_Esperantistaj\\_Instruistoj](https://eo.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internacia_Ligo_de_Esperantistaj_Instruistoj).

<sup>17</sup> Lins Ulrich: Die gefährliche Sprache: die Verfolgung der Esperantisten unter Hitler und Stalin. I. Gerlingen : Bleicher, ©1988.

<sup>18</sup> Ivan Vetrih in Franjo Bratoš: Sedemdeset let esperantskega gibanja v Mariboru-Jugoslavija. Maribor, 1980.

European Community, the Esperanto movement experienced a new era, and new opportunities emerged to expand tourism with the help of Esperanto and for the sake of Esperanto.

Even more than other governmental and non-governmental organizations, which have witnessed an impressive increase in reputation and influence in recent decades, the Esperanto movement requires in particular numerous contacts and in one way or another promotes tourism within countries, regions and states, cultivating in particular broad regional and international contacts. Esperanto organizations are widespread across all continents, the most densely of course in Europe,<sup>19</sup> therefore, various Esperanto events, meetings and travels, as shown in the calendar of Esperanto events prepared by Hungary, are widespread across the world.<sup>20</sup> Apart from that, Esperantists celebrate many historical, cultural and other events that are associated with the history of Esperanto or with important days and years, which are celebrated by the UNESCO and the *UN*, for example, the International Day of Peace, the International Day of Mother Languages or the European Day of Languages.<sup>21</sup> In addition, Esperanto organizations are directly or indirectly associated with many religious, cultural, professional, peace, women, scientific and professional organizations.

The Esperantists also developed various specialized professional organisations of railwaymen, educators, teachers, lawyers, doctors, ecologists, journalists, writers and various amateur clubs, not to mention the scouts, athletes, chess players, translators, young Esperantists and Esperanto families.<sup>22</sup> Within the *UEA* and elsewhere they have compiled a comprehensive list of countries, cities and towns in which Esperanto memorials, libraries, museums, schools, cafés and hotels are located and which are relevant in particular to Esperanto speakers and tourists. It is also possible to visit over 80 major libraries, which store not only Esperanto books and documents, but also literature on interlinguistics.

In France, Germany, Spain, Poland, Brazil and elsewhere, there are also towns and cities that are particularly favorable to Esperanto and which adjust to this language their cultural and tourist services and facilities, especially by running schools and giving Esperanto courses. These "Esperanto cities" are very attractive, because there the tourists in general and Esperantists in particular feel good. Apart from large-scale contacts between Esperantists and in addition to libraries, museums and memorials of great importance, there are also countless personal connections over the Internet. For these purposes, the

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<sup>19</sup> List of Esperanto organizations; <https://en.wikipedia.org>.

<sup>20</sup> *Internacia kalendaro de Esperanto-aranĝoj*, 2017. Kompilita ĉe Esperanto-Centro Eventoj en Budapeŝto; <http://eventoj.hu/2017.htm>.

<sup>21</sup> Esperanto-festotagoj; <https://eo.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esperanto-festotagoj>.

<sup>22</sup> *Fakaj Esperanto-asocioj*; [https://eo.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fakaj-Esperanto\\_asocioj](https://eo.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fakaj-Esperanto_asocioj).

UEA has released a special list of possible internet connections to facilitate various contacts between the Esperantists and the UEA in different areas of the world, from Europe to Arab countries, making it possible for potential candidates to connect on the basis of their interests and professional fields.<sup>23</sup> All of this is of great importance for modern tourism.

It is Bydgoszcz, which is especially interesting for Esperanto tourism, former Bromberg, which since 1772 belonged to the Kingdom of Prussia. After the annexation of this town by Poland after the First World War, there began a vibrant Esperanto movement, which continues with undiminished intensity even today. The teaching of Esperanto was introduced at the local grammar school, Esperanto textbooks were published, clubs, which attracted mass membership, set up, and since 1976, competitions in Esperanto poetry have been organized. Since 1990, the city has annually prepared an international exhibition of Esperanto tourism, issuing the magazine *Monda turismo*, which reports on developments at home and abroad. In this city, there is the seat of the school of higher education that has trained tourism workers in Esperanto for over twenty years. This is the famous international school of tourism and culture, *Internacia Studumo pri Turismo kaj Kulturo en Bydgoszcz*, where the teaching language is Esperanto, the school also cooperates with the *International Academy of Sciences* in San Marino, which has lectures in Esperanto. In recent decades, Esperantists have, with the cooperation of this school, organized a number of Esperanto tourist travels, set up the club Esperantotur, published news about tourism in the world, prepared youth ferial events, international Esperanto meetings, Esperanto days, weeks, conferences on global tourism, ran the continuous school of Esperanto, organized seminars about Esperanto in tourism, regularly published reports, invitations and plans to travel around the world with the help of Esperanto,<sup>24</sup> and finally, they prepared a number of exhibitions about Esperanto and tourism. Since 1974, they have published an Esperanto tourist calendar on a yearly basis. They organize international symposiums on the Esperanto tourism and of course publish invitations and school curricula in their school magazine *Monda Turismo*.<sup>25</sup> It would be interesting to know if anyone from Slovenia has ever attended any of their events, or at least visited this famous school, and finally, if our tourism schools are aware of this school's excellent programs that bring a new spirit into the world of tourism.

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<sup>23</sup> Dissendo-listoj en Esperanto au pri Esperanto; <http://esperanto-panorama.net/unikode/dissendo.htm>.

<sup>24</sup> *Turisma esperanto kalendaro por 2014-2015. Vojaĝu kun Esperantotur tra la mondo*; <http://esperantomovado.blogspot.si/2014/04/fwd-turisma-esperanto-kalendaro-2014.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Centre de documentation et d'étude sur la langue internationale Centro de Dokumentado kaj Esploro pri la Lingvo Internacia CDELI. Archives consultables sur place Arkivoj surloke konsulteblaj. *Monda Turismo*; <http://www.cdeli.org/diversajhoj/Monda-Turismo-MT.pdf>.

For tourism as well for the affirmation of Esperanto it would be of great importance if the use of that language would become more frequent and more taken for granted. With modest sacrifices, some tourism workers could learn Esperanto, as tourist workers as a rule are linguistically competent. Consequently, they could do something for the introduction of Esperanto in the hotels, spas, travel agencies, holiday homes or on administrative boards of tourism organizations, which would be a great personal enrichment and a new business opportunity as well. These tourist environments would be ideal for the people who, in addition to the normal requirements, satisfied by conventional tourism, are looking for and need deeper insights into places and people, with whom they could establish personal contacts that would ethically and culturally enrich local people, workers, and of course tourism hosts and visitors.

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