

NEWSLETTER



TOP NEWS OF SEMESTER 4

ABOUT THE PROGRESS

Joint activities taking place

Several local, regional and interregional events took place in Semester 4 to support partner institutions in finding the appropriate solution for challenges clearly defined in the regional holistic diagnosis outcomes.

In the 4th semester the learning from each other continued, experiencing solutions taking place in partner countries while meeting the enthusiastic locals are the core benefits of the exchange of experiences. Within the frames of the SYSTOUR project, more and more good and applicable practices are getting shared.

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SHARING AND LEARNING

Events in focus

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF RURAL TOURISM: INSIGHTS FROM THE SYSTOUR HOLISTIC DIAGNOSIS

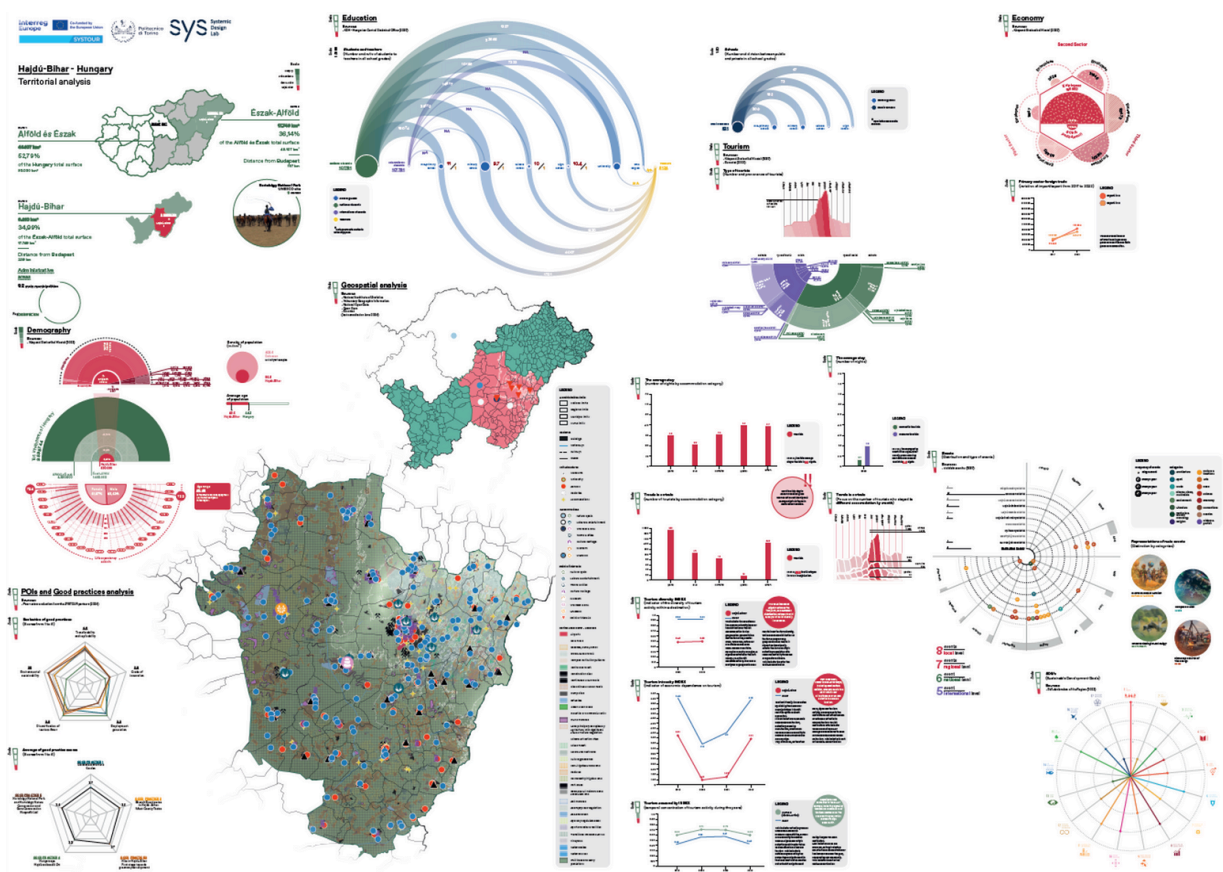
The SYSTOUR project is taking bold steps toward transforming rural tourism across Europe through its recently completed holistic diagnosis—a strategic, collaborative assessment methodology developed by advisory lead partner Politecnico di Torino. Rooted in Systemic Design, this approach integrates local stakeholder input, territorial analysis, and sustainable development principles to craft tailored policy recommendations for six participating regions: Hungary, Poland, Italy, Spain, France, and Finland.

The diagnosis evaluates regions through a comprehensive lens—looking at mobility, digital infrastructure, and authentic regional experiences such as gastronomy, wellness, and eco-leisure. Key findings highlight pressing challenges like inadequate public transport, connectivity gaps, and limited tourism diversification. Through study visits, peer reviews, and workshops, the regions identified 30 good practices and began shaping roadmaps for future tourism strategies.

What sets this diagnosis apart is its participatory and impact-oriented approach. It doesn't just analyze demographics and economic data—it also uncovers interconnections between tourism and broader societal goals, such as green job creation, depopulation reversal, and territorial cohesion. Each region's diagnosis feeds into the development of regional roadmaps—strategic planning tools that translate diagnosis findings into concrete policy improvements and action plans.

These roadmaps, aligned with EU cohesion and PO5 (“Europe closer to citizens”) objectives, will guide efforts to enhance green mobility, strengthen digital access, diversify tourism offerings, and support green employment. They form the foundation for multi-region recommendations and policy briefs, set to inform the project's implementation phase in 2026–2027.

By shifting tourism flows from overcrowded destinations to underutilized rural gems, SYSTOUR fosters equitable, resilient, and sustainable tourism ecosystems that honor Europe's cultural and natural heritage.



APESA HOSTS FINAL SYSTOUR STUDY VISIT IN NOUVELLE-AQUITAINE

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On November 20–21, 2024, APESA welcomed 26 participants from six European institutions to Nouvelle-Aquitaine for the final study visit of the Interreg Europe SYSTOUR project. In collaboration with regional tourism offices and local stakeholders, the visit spotlighted sustainable tourism initiatives across the rural territories of Béarn and Soule Xiberoa.

The first day centered on Béarn, beginning in Pau with an overview of Nouvelle-Aquitaine's sustainable tourism strategy. Participants explored projects like Flaning Béarn's discovery tours and the TOKIKOA label, promoting local products in restaurants. A highlight was the visit to La Transhumance restaurant in the Aspe Valley, an eco-conscious inn housed in a former railway station for sheep transhumance.

Day two took attendees to Grottes de la Verna, where a public-private partnership is developing tourism around this impressive natural site. The visit continued with a stop at a traditional espadrille workshop in Mauléon and the UNESCO-listed Church of L'Hôpital-Saint-Blaise, where local leaders shared efforts to preserve and promote cultural heritage.

The visit concluded SYSTOUR's series of interregional exchanges, reinforcing shared strategies for sustainable, locally rooted tourism development across Europe's rural regions.

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Innovative Green Investments Breathe New Life into Depopulated Regions

SYSTOUR's Online Event Highlights Strategies for Rural Revitalization Across Europe February 12, 2025.

The SYSTOUR project, part of the Interreg Europe program, hosted its second online learning event focusing on how innovative business investments and green jobs can help revitalize depopulated rural areas across Europe.

The webinar, titled "Innovative Business Investments, Green Jobs and Challenges in Revitalizing Depopulated Areas," brought together regional policymakers, development professionals, and sustainability advocates to share actionable strategies for rural regeneration.

New Business Models for Local Impact

Speakers presented successful case studies highlighting sustainable tourism, agro-innovation, and community-driven enterprises. These models are designed to suit the specific needs of rural and shrinking regions—offering not only economic opportunity but also renewed community identity.

Green Jobs as a Catalyst for Growth

A central theme was the creation of green jobs—roles tied to renewable energy, circular economy systems, and eco-services. Panelists emphasized the importance of reskilling local populations to take part in emerging sustainable industries that are both environmentally and economically resilient.

Revitalizing Communities Through Local Leadership

Presenters from regions such as Central Ostrobothnia (Finland) shared how targeted investments and cross-sector partnerships have helped address depopulation. Key strategies included:

- Encouraging place-based innovation
- Supporting social enterprises and cooperatives
- Aligning with EU green transition goals

The event also featured an engaging Q&A session, where attendees discussed barriers to implementation and funding pathways—highlighting the role of public-private cooperation in scaling successful initiatives.

Watch the Recording

The full webinar is available on [YouTube](#), offering inspiration for those working to make rural regions more sustainable, vibrant, and future-ready.

► Stakeholders Explore Modern Tourism Trends at 5th Regional Meeting in Kielce

On February 25, 2025, the Marshal Office of the Świętokrzyskie Region hosted the 5th Stakeholders Group Meeting in Kielce, gathering 11 participants to discuss modern tourism trends inspired by the French region of Nouvelle-Aquitaine. The event was organized by the Department of Regional Development and the Tourism Branch of the Department of Tourism, Sport and Foreign Affairs.

The meeting focused on sustainable tourism, enotourism, and entrepreneurial innovation. Presentations by Sylwia Skuta and Jędrzej Borowiecki highlighted the Tourism Lab Nouvelle-Aquitaine, a French initiative that connects academia, entrepreneurs, and local authorities to develop innovative tourism products.

Several good practices from France were showcased, including:

- LaCommande – Maison des Vins: vineyard visits and wine-tasting events;
- Tokikoa Initiative: local-product-only restaurant promotion;
- Tourism Lab Nouvelle-Aquitaine: startup support for tourism innovation;
- Hôtel La Transhumance (Bedous): eco-friendly hospitality in the Aspe Valley;
- Hôpital-Saint-Blaise Church: immersive heritage promotion using light and sound.

A key discussion point was the potential creation of a Świętokrzyskie Tourism Lab, aimed at fostering local innovation in tourism. Stakeholders explored its possible goals, target groups, and tools.

"French experiences show that investing in an innovative and sustainable approach to tourism can benefit both tourists and local communities. We want to transfer these inspirations to our region," said Sylwia Skuta.

The event concluded with an open debate on the future of tourism in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, with a focus on adapting European best practices to local needs.



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► International Collaboration Supports Strategic Tourism Development in Hajdú-Bihar County

On 28 November, 2024, a professional meeting was held in Debrecen, bringing together stakeholders from multiple projects, including SYSTOUR, to align efforts in shaping the region's tourism development strategy. The event featured a joint framework that fostered synergies across initiatives and helped coordinate broader development goals.

Participants presented recent project outcomes, with a particular focus on experiences from international study visits conducted over the past six months. SYSTOUR partners visited Central .

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SYSTOUR



Ostrobothnia in Finland and Nouvelle-Aquitaine (APESA) in France, where they explored local best practices in sustainable tourism and environmental innovation.

These visits provided valuable inspiration and transferable examples for Hajdú-Bihar County's ongoing tourism planning. In parallel, a systematic regional tourism analysis was completed, offering insights into current conditions and using complexity maps to guide strategic decisions.

The next key step will be the development of a detailed action plan to support the implementation of the county's tourism strategy.

A follow-up expert meeting is tentatively planned for early summer 2025.

