



Photo: Viktor Kovacs

The Best Coffee in Town

It is difficult not to fall in love with Banska Stiavnica, a small medieval town in southern Slovakia. Once upon a time, gold and silver were mined here, and the buildings of the old town still witness the former riches of the miners. You can start a day with a cup of coffee in the Art Café and have a chat with the owner, who is a member of the Association for Sustainable Tourism. He also can help you to find a guesthouse – so you have a chance to stay in a sixteenth or seventeenth century building restored to its original glory, and with today's luxury bathroom and kitchen.

If you come on the right day, or you plan your trip accordingly, you can join one of a number of street festivals organised by the association in summer. Hiking in picturesque surroundings is an option, as well as visiting the mining museum or the botanical garden. Splendid Slovakian food will satisfy your curiosity for local tastes and you will wish for nothing more.

Banska Stiavnica is one of the first case studies worldwide on the implementation of the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Sustainable tourism development in Banska Stiavnica was started by Ecological Tourism in Europe (ETE) and Amber Trail Association (Jantarova Cesta) in 2001. For more information contact Michael Meyer, the member of the board of ETE, via <m.meyer@oete.de>.



Photo: Zsuzsa Tolnay

Life Outside the Caves

Jazz and rock concerts, national dances and songs, street comedies, handicraft markets, guided tours in nature, art exhibitions – all this and much more can be experienced in one location. During the 10 days of the Gomor-Torna festival the visitor can choose from more than 100 events. In 2006 the festival took place in 12 villages on both sides of the Hungarian-Slovakian border.

During the festival, locals invite you to take part in the activities. Learn a traditional dance, make handicrafts, or cook traditional food according to ancient recipes, and of course you get to keep (or eat) your own creations. The area where the festival takes place is famous for beautiful karst caves with dripstones. Visitors used to come and leave on the same day, limiting the income possibilities for the local community.

The organisation of the festival is supported by a project devoted to tourism development in biosphere reserves and apart from providing quality entertainment to tourists, the festival aims at bringing income to local people, preserving traditions and enhancing co-operation between the bordering regions.

For more information contact Zsuzsa Tolnay, Head of Eco-tourism and Eco-education Department, Aggtelek National Park Directorate via <tolnayzs@mail.kvvm.hu>.



Photo: Olga Silego

Join the Ride

Our aim is to make tourism in Central and Eastern European countries sustainable. Such tourism will benefit local communities and nature, and provide unforgettable experiences to tourists. We are NGOs from Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Germany, Romania, Poland, Serbia, and others, working together under the umbrella of CEEWEB Sustainable Tourism Working Group. We strive towards our goal through joint activities, like information exchange, promoting good practices, training and education, policy-making, pilot projects and lobbying.

We hope this brochure will help you find the way to places where local people enjoy their lives and tourists always want to come back. Contact us if you would like to learn more about sustainable tourism, join the working group, or support our activities.

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Sustainable tourism now and in the future

With a map inside:
A Sustainable Tourism Village in the Year 2012



www.ceeweb.org/workinggroups/sustainabletourism



Photo: Rita Francia

Modern Traditions

Five tiny villages of the Neauea community make a perfect location to experience the traditional way of life in the Carpathian foothills in Romania. Children will be excited to see how a blacksmith makes a horseshoe or a beekeeper carefully removes the honeycombs from beehives. Such traditional activities are presented during summer in the Forest School, along with hiking, birdwatching, and learning about nature.

The Livelihood Museum is dedicated to both tourists and local people. Among other animals, buffalos and the hairy mangolica pigs are on show in the museum's farm. Raising such animals is part of the region's heritage, and the practice is making a comeback. Revival and modernisation of traditional agriculture is seen as the best solution for the prosperity of the community.

Animal husbandry and rural tourism were among the most popular options for the development of the area chosen by the population during the workshops about the future vision of the community. The project on sustainable regional development is implemented by CEEWEB and Milvus Group with active involvement of local people and with the financial support of DOEN Foundation and the Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation.

For more information contact Marton Attila Kelemen, the vice-president of Milvus Group, via <marton.kelemen@milvus.ro>.



Photo: Dominika Zareba

Everyday Miracles

Father Romuald Wilk and the windmill are two highlights of Przyslop community. The Father, who is leading the monastery of the Order of the Discalced (Barefoot) Carmelites located in the village, has inspired many community actions in the area. The inhabitants of this tiny village located near the Babia Gora National Park and Biosphere Reserve in Poland live "in harmony with the Decalogue and nature."

The village is small, just 500 people, but they do great things. For example, they prevented a local school from being closed through the establishment of an environmental education centre. They also developed an educational path that forms a section of the Amber Trail and attracts quite a number of tourists. The Amber Trail runs from Budapest, Hungary through Banska Stiavnica in Slovakia and towards Krakow, Poland. Biking on this 300-kilometre trail is sure to be a highlight of the summer.

For more information contact the Association for Sustainable Development Przyslop, via <zawojasp4@interia.pl> or Dominika Zareba, National Greenways Manager of the Polish Environmental Partnership Foundation via <dominika.zareba@epce.org.pl>.



Photo: Young Researcher of Serbia

Your Best Summer Job Ever

The nature will leave you breathless if you take a boat trip in the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica, located in northern Serbia. It is also worth checking out the nearby town of Sremska Mitrovica for ancient Roman heritage or a village of Zasavica I, where a local family can provide visitors with insight into traditional cooking, handicrafts and rural life in general.

Adventurous time is guaranteed for people from all over the world coming to the nature reserve to spend their vacations in an alternative way. The voluntary work at the International Work Camps includes making souvenirs from natural materials or helping keep the water levels right by cleaning the surface of the rivers from unwanted vegetation. The fun parts include excursions, evening parties and the work itself.

The dedication of the protected area manager and others makes the implementation of the tourism management plan for the area possible. The draft plan was developed in 2004 by the Ecological Tourism in Europe and NGO Goransko - ekoloski pokret, which manages the protected area with support from other NGOs: CenORT, E-Team, and CEEWEB.

For more information contact Slobodan Simic, the director of NGO Goransko - ekoloski pokret, via <zasavica@zasavica.org.yu>.


7 tips

How to Start Sustainable Tourism

- 1 Read a book on sustainable tourism. Pick one from <www.ceeweb.org/workinggroups/sustainabletourism/resources>.
- 2 Buy local products. Travel by train. Become a sustainable tourist yourself.
- 3 Learn about local traditions.
- 4 Enjoy what you do.
- 5 Gather different people to discuss what sustainable tourism is and what you can do about it.
- 6 Think of something to add to this list.
- 7 Write to <office@ceeweb.org> – let us know about your plans.

Deciding Together

A place where all are happy about their future

 **Municipality building**, where the meetings of the Association for Sustainable Tourism normally take place

The mayor was among the initiators of the sustainable tourism development in the village. "We did this together with local people, including local entrepreneurs," he says. "Probably that is why we were so successful: we were implementing our own decisions. When we started in 2006 – six years ago, it is surprising how fast time goes – our village had high unemployment and practically no tourists. We live in such a beautiful place, but young people were leaving for the city." The mayor laughs, "to tell you the truth, when I was first elected, the situation here seemed to be hopeless. I didn't have a clue what to do about it."

"I think the most important change that happened during those six years of sustainable tourism development in the village is not only that people are better off, but that villagers now understand that they can improve their living themselves. We decided about our future together and we are really happy about it," he adds, nodding proudly.




"In the very beginning, we had some help of an NGO from outside our village. They organised trainings, explaining how to attract tourists and preserve our culture and nature at the same time, so tourists keep coming back. But we did all the planning ourselves. We are following our own vision about the future of the village and implementing our plans."

The Reeb family has an eco-farm and a restaurant and attribute most of their success in business to sustainable tourism development in the village. "We took part in the process from the very beginning," says Mrs Reeb. "I joined the Association for Sustainable Tourism when it was established three years ago, back in 2009. The association meets every few months to talk about our experiences and to decide how to develop tourism better. More and more tourists come, and once we even had an offer from an international investor to build a big hotel here. We discussed this in the association and we decided to refuse. We prefer keeping the income from tourists for our own people."

"How did we do it?" Mr Reeb has to think before answering. "Everything started with the trainings. Then we prepared a sustainable tourism development plan for our village and now we are implementing it. No, it just sounds easy. Even with my wife we have some disagreements," he adds with a wink. "Imagine deciding with all the neighbours on how our village should look in 50 years. But it was fun."

Enjoying Nature and Better Health

Active recreation

-  **Cycling path**
-  **Boat station**
-  **Tourist trail**

"We came here for two weeks. It's really a pity we can't stay longer. Our kids like it here a lot," says a young couple, as they look at their two sons and daughter, none of them older than ten, spluttering each other in the water. "Yes, while here, we often come to the beach."

These two weeks of swimming, cycling and hiking mean a lot to us, since you can't do these things in the city. What a perfect place to rest! There are many hiking trails, you can rent a bike or play volleyball at the beach.

"Last week we crossed the river by boat and took a guided tour to the protected area. I think our children will never forget the trip. Piotr, our youngest, is still searching for owls in every tree as soon as it gets dark."

Nature will always remain useful

-  **Protected area border**
-  **Forest, swamp**




Victor works as a tour guide in the nature reserve. He was born in the village and says the magnificent forests, mountains and the river inspired him to become a biologist.

"I'm really happy I can work here and show all this beauty to others," boasts the 26-year-old guide. "We had very bad times in the past – there were plans to build a huge factory nearby. I thought the forests would be cut, the river polluted, the wetlands drained. But then, some clever people in our village found a solution – to develop tourism instead, and to create jobs without ruining the nature. We followed the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development of the Convention on Biological Diversity."

Mrs Petri owns a tourism agency that brings a number of tourists to the village. She speaks highly of the people who initiated the movement: "Indeed, I am very grateful that people were wise at the time. The nature reserve is one of the biggest attractions to the visitors, so my company does a lot to preserve it. Also, we hire local guides. The villagers value the forest greatly – many have jobs that depend on it."

Long-lasting Prosperity



Tourists enjoy locally produced food and drinks

-  **Brewery, wine cellar** Mr and Mrs Rosehips grow grapes. A few years ago they opened their old wine cellar for visitors. Mrs Rosehip says, "We used to sell the grapes we grew to a big wine producer and make wine just for ourselves."
-  **Farmland, eco-farm**
-  **Restaurant**

But when tourists started coming to our village, we put a few tables to our wine cellar and started serving our wine. You cannot get it anywhere else; you have to come to our village for it. We have regular visitors returning for our wine and for the stories of my husband. He likes telling how the grapes are grown and how the wine is made."

Mr Rosehip adds, "It wasn't easy to open our own business. The neighbours convinced me to do it. They have an eco-farm and a restaurant. Tourists go for high-quality food that is grown and stored in a natural way, and that doesn't have to be transported for miles, so it remains fresh. Their business is very successful."

Income from tourists staying overnight

-  **Camping** The pension of the Summerset family was certified as a sustainable tourism accommodation ten months ago. In operation since 1995, the pension is more than 15 years old. "We thought it was a good chance to get certified, so that we receive more guests," says the owner.
-  **Hotel, pension**

"We expected that it would be enough to install energy efficient light bulbs and save water (and we did that to save costs). But when we started working on the certification we realised that we need to change the way we run our pension. We needed to refurbish anyway, and the new furniture you see here is produced by the local carpenter. Now we buy most of the products for the breakfast from the neighbours. In this way we help our village to prosper. What I like about all these changes the most is that our visitors like our pension much better. Our guest book is full of such notes as the food was great, very cosy place, we will come back next year."

Long-term employment

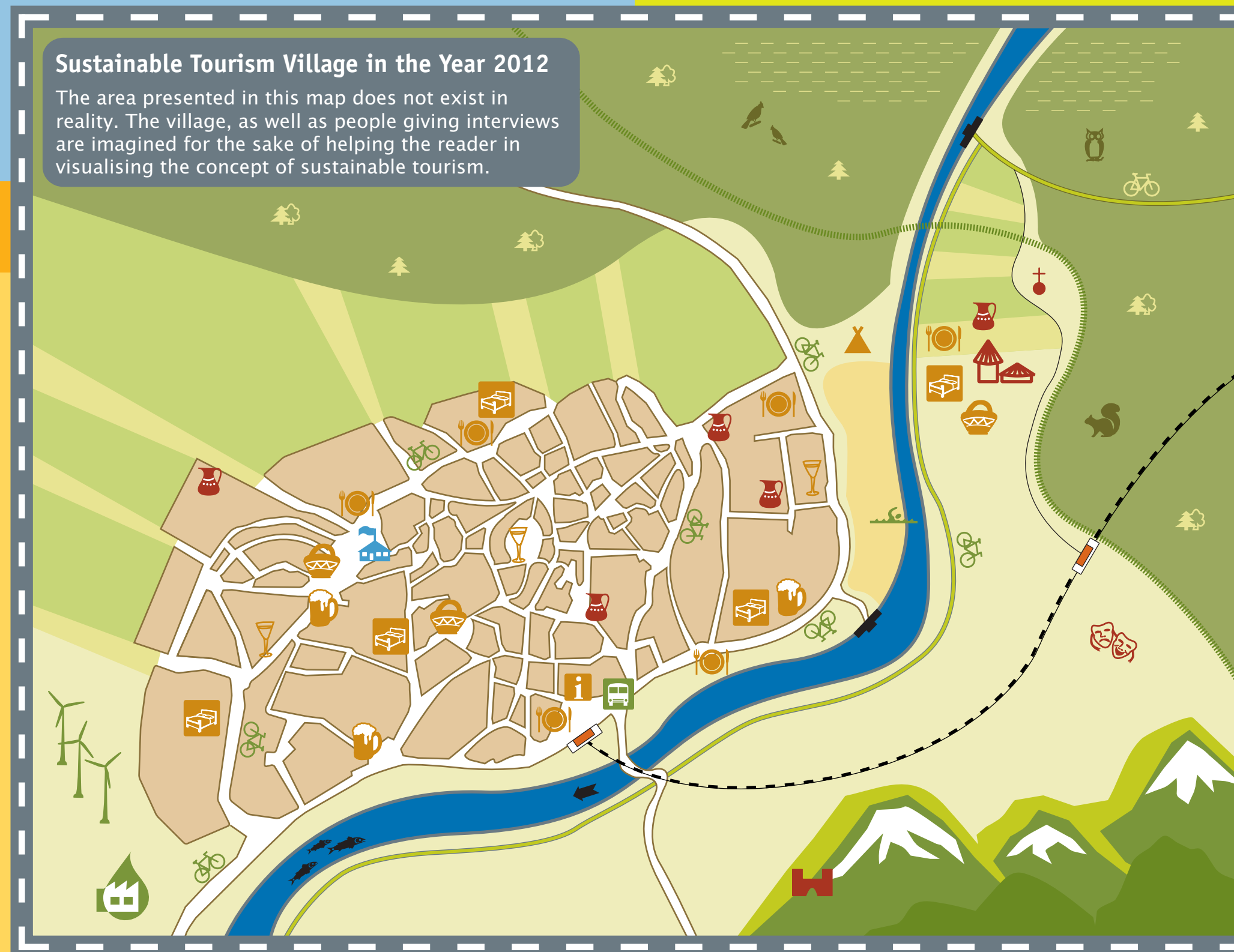
Information point

The Association for Sustainable Tourism collects information on where to stay in the village, places to eat and buying souvenirs. It published a map with points of interest and some brochures with useful information for visitors. "I came here for one day to visit the castle nearby, but I see I have to stay for another day or two," confesses Camilla from the UK. "There is so much to do in the village. I plan to see the museum tomorrow and I saw a poster about the midsummer festival."

Mr Haddon is responsible in the association for promoting the village. "We try to attract tourists who appreciate culture and nature. It is essential that high numbers of visitors do not spoil what we cherish. Not only because we love our village, but also because we want to have tourists coming back."

Sustainable Tourism Village in the Year 2012

The area presented in this map does not exist in reality. The village, as well as people giving interviews are imagined for the sake of helping the reader in visualising the concept of sustainable tourism.



Local people sell handcrafted artefacts

-  **Handicraft shop**

Ms Aichele owns a handicraft shop. "I put all my heart into it. I have no husband, no children. This shop is my whole life. All those things around me carry their spirit. I know the people well who made them. Oh, just look at this vase – it was made by Mr Madley! He is a real artist! He was so handsome when he was young..."

And look at this wooden bench, isn't it lovely? Mr Otto makes all the furniture from local wood. I put him in touch with the Summersets, so he got a big order for the furniture for their pension. I always try to help people who own restaurants and hotels here to get in touch with the local artists. The village is small, but even so without me they might never meet each other.

"But I am happiest when a tourist buys something. I then imagine where the purchase will find its place. Will it be a present to somebody, or a reminder of a nice trip? Of course, I'm happy about the money as well," and adds that she could go on for hours.

Crafts and arts revived



-  **Handicraft workshop**

Mr Medley has never abandoned his craft, but the wrinkles on his face are a telltale sign of the hard times he has seen. "Years ago this village was famous for its pottery. I am so happy to see that the fame is coming back," says the grey-haired man. "I taught my son the craft I learned from my father, but the poor boy couldn't make a good living, so he left for the city. With the boom in tourism, Arthur is back and our work is selling so well we rarely have a free minute."

Arthur, the son of the potter adds, "Many things have changed here, so I decided to come back and I have no regrets. We sell through the souvenir shops, during the Culture Festival, and we make dishes for the local restaurants. I also run ceramics classes for children."

"It is good to be home. I see other crafts are becoming popular as well. Have you noticed that many houses in the village are decorated with wood carvings? Like pottery, this art was almost forgotten, but now there are skilled woodworkers in the village again."

Easy to reach, pleasantly clean

-  **Waste water treatment plant, renewable energy plant**
-  **Bus station, train station**

"Tourists come and go, but I want the river to stay clean so that I can spend my time angling when I retire," whispered the environmental manager of the municipality as if telling a carefully guarded secret. "Our waste water management plant is quite new. The municipality could never afford it before the tourism developments started. Also the windmills are new. We raised money from donors for the implementation of the tourism development plan – that's why we have them."

"We used taxes raised from tourism to build the bike paths. When we worked on the development plan, people said they wanted more tourists, but they didn't want a bunch of cars in the village. So we developed a programme on how to encourage tourists to come by public transport. For example, if you show your train ticket at the pension, you will get a discount."

A Region Alive

Living traditions

-  **Castle**
-  **Ecovillage**
-  **Church**

"Do you remember? Everything changed for good when our young priest started his service here. Since then so many people gather for the Church Festival like when we were young," two ladies of respected age shout to each other.

"Indeed, after the priest joined the Association for Sustainable Tourism many good things have happened," confirmed Clare, a tall young man. "One would say the ecovillage is a museum where you can have good fun. But it is also my home," he says slowly. "There were some old abandoned farm houses on the other side of the river. I am an architect, so I thought, 'why not restore them?' Of course, I needed some help. For four summers we organised working camps on traditional architecture. Now three families live here, all of us have kids. We run an ecofarm, an ethnographic museum in one of the houses and a souvenir shop. We still have summer camps on traditional crafts of this region. The last one about basket weaving and wood carving came out especially good."

Festivals to celebrate uniqueness

-  **Open-air stage**

Daniela is the events manager of the national park, which also holds the status of UNESCO Man and Biosphere reserve. "The open-air stage belongs to the municipality and is outside of the national park's territory. But it's in the buffer zone of the biosphere reserve, so I managed to arrange for some funds for its renovation and maintenance. It's a perfect location for the Culture in Nature Festival we organise each year."

"We are very happy to cooperate with Daniela," assures the mayor. "The festival is always a great success. For me the most important thing is that my fellow villagers enjoy the festival both as visitors and as performers. We have a rich culture and we are proud of it. I myself participate in a traditional dance group, and we go on stage every year. Also, the festival attracts hundreds of people, so of course, it brings income to the villagers."