

# VITAL LANDSCAPES

Joint media strategy

Tools and experiences to communicate  
the values of Central European cultural  
landscapes



EUROPEAN UNION  
EUROPEAN REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT FUND



**VITAL  
LANDSCAPES**  
CENTRAL EUROPE Project

## **VITAL LANDSCAPES**

Valorisation and Sustainable Development of Cultural Landscapes  
using innovative Participation and Visualisation Techniques

Work package 2

2.1.10: Joint Media Strategy to communicate the values  
of CE landscapes

### Project partners:

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Institute of Geography of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Slovak Republic (PP4)  
Faculty of Agriculture, University of South Bohemia in České Budejovice,  
Czech Republic (PP5)  
Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary (PP6)  
University of Agriculture in Krakow, Poland (PP7)  
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### Published by:

Landgesellschaft Sachsen-Anhalt mbH  
Gr. Diesdorfer Str. 56/57, D-39110 Magdeburg

January 2013

Further information on the project is available on [www.vital-landscapes.eu](http://www.vital-landscapes.eu).



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This Project is implemented through the Central Europe Programme co-financed by the ERDF.

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## **0 Introduction**

Cultural landscapes are a common Central European value. However, they are continuously neglected and destroyed due to missing consciousness of their value and the lack of willingness or imagination to consider alternatives. Thus, information about the existing values, communication of the challenges and losses and the dissemination of project outputs how to link sustainable economic development and preservation of landscapes is a core element of the whole project.

Against this background, an important aim of the VITAL LANDSCAPES project was to develop a joint strategy and practical recommendations how to communicate the topic of sustainable development of cultural landscapes in Central Europe to the media and to the public, ready to apply for other user as well.

During the lifetime of the project, a wide range of media relevant activities have been carried out by the partners. Some of the activities applied rather traditional tools like press journeys or newspaper information campaigns. However, the approach to focus on landscape and regional development was new and caused multiple benefits. Moreover, the project developed a series of innovative tools like production of movies, web based photo exhibitions and geo-referenced database of cultural landscape elements.

The following media strategy summarizes the experiences and best practices of the Project in communicating cultural landscapes and provides practical recommendations and practical examples, ready to apply for other users as well (e.g. governmental and non-governmental organisations dealing with CL protection and development; local, regional and national administrations; managers/authorities responsible for protected areas; people engaged in ELC implementation; local/regional/national media). The strategy will hopefully encourage and enable these target groups to use the media more intensively and more professionally to sensitise ordinary people, regional stakeholders and decision makers to the topic – one key precondition to ensure sound and more conscious landscape management in future.

At the beginning, the strategy will analyse the information and communication needs of different target groups, identify key elements of the common issue (CE cultural landscapes as a common value, opportunities to combine the preservation of landscapes with economic development, and practical approaches to develop alternative solutions by using innovative methods to visualise regional development scenarios) and develop strategies to communicate these key elements by different media on regional, national and CE level.

## 1 Communicating landscape: starting points, challenges and needs

Since Central European landscapes are only weak protected by law, their maintenance and sustainable development will only succeed if a broad public and a wide range of decision makers and stakeholders appreciate the values of landscapes, become aware of the daily losses and can be motivated to engage for sustainable landscape development.

Furthermore, the backbones of the Project are cross-sectoral networks of stakeholders, decision makers and local people in the pilot regions. To reach these different target groups and to motivate them for active participation in the development process, a diverse and intensive communication and PR is necessary.

At the same time, one key focus of the Project is to connect new visualisation techniques with innovative regional participation processes as a result of the common activities. This combination requires by its nature the use of different communication and PR tools, mostly connected with new Media.

Based on this general background and the overall objectives, the media activities of the Project intend to support the following **specific objectives**:

- General awareness raising amongst different target groups to the topic of values, damages and sustainable development of landscapes
- Influencing the public to engage for and to support positive changes in landscape development; promoting the participation of different actors in spatial development
- Changing/influencing public policy of landscape planning on national, regional and local level
- Changing/influencing opinions, attitudes and behaviour of potential users with regard to cultural landscapes (farmers, tourists, enterprises etc.); demonstrating the day-to-day influences of everyone's activities on landscape
- Highlighting the connection of sustainable development of landscapes and the quality of life (for local people and potential visitors)
- Promoting best practices in spatial planning and sustainable landscape development
- Addressing and involving new target groups, e.g. younger people and children
- Promoting sustainable development in general
- Educating local people and stakeholders about the values and opportunities of landscapes (e.g. in nature parks)
- Involving local people in activities to improve the local/regional situation (e.g. restoring degraded areas, development of new brands)
- Collecting ideas and propositions from local people; sharing of (traditional) knowledge, experiences and best practices

## 2 Audiences and target groups of media activities

The topic of landscape development affects a wide range of target groups. In principle, every citizen is concerned and involved since many human activities influence landscape development. Even inhabitants of big cities and urban centres affect landscape e.g. by leisure activities, gaining resources (water, air, food) or depositing waste and exhaust. Thus, media activities of the VITAL LANDSCAPES Project basically target on a broad public.

However, there are more specific target groups of people and institutions who are directly involved in landscape affecting activities, be it as a side-effect of their activities (e.g. farmers, tourism organizers, enterprises, construction and traffic companies), be it as a main subject of their operations (e.g. landscape architects, planners, politicians, nature protection NGOs). Finally, also the scientific community in landscape research and innovative visualisation techniques will be an important target group.

In detail, the different media activities of VITAL LANDSCAPES target at the following audiences and groups:

### a) General public

Target group	Information and communication needs	Suitable communication tools
Decision makers and politicians on national, regional and local level	General information about values, damages and sustainable development of landscapes	Project Website, Newsletter, flyer, brochures, public information events, excursions
Spatial planners and landscape architects, respective professional associations	New approaches to visualise and moderate landscape development scenarios	Project Website, Newsletter, brochures, exhibitions, final Project publication, excursions
Farmers and other persons in charge with agriculture	General information about values, damages and sustainable development of landscapes, with focus on agriculture	Newsletter, flyer, public information events, newspaper campaigns, promotion films
NGOs and institutions active in the field of regional development, nature and landscape protection	Practical recommendations to communicate the sustainable development of cultural landscapes to the public and to decision makers	Project Website, Newsletter, flyer, brochures, public information events, regional field trips, trans-national study tours
Tourists and visitors, leisure activists and sportsmen, tour operators and tourism agencies, landscape guides	General information about values, damages and sustainable development of landscapes, with special focus on tourism and leisure activities	Exhibitions, flyer, public information events, newspaper campaigns, promotion films, guided landscape tours
Ordinary people, above all in cities and urban areas	General information about values, damages and sustainable development of landscapes, with special focus on producing positive images	Newspaper campaigns, flyer, promotion films
National and regional Media	General information about values, damages and sustainable development of landscapes	Press releases, press journeys, TV and broadcast interviews

## b) Local/regional actors and decision makers in the pilot regions

Target group	Information and communication needs	Suitable communication tools
Employees of regional / local communities and municipalities	General information about the pilot project(s) and the regional networks; promotion of values, damages and sustainable development of regional landscapes	Newsletter, flyer, brochures, public information events, regional field trips, trans-national study tours
Mayors, regional administrations and local parliaments	General information about the pilot project(s) and the regional networks; promotion of values, damages and sustainable development of regional landscapes	Newsletter, flyer, brochures, public information events, regional field trips, trans-national study tours
Regional stakeholders and key actors, potential members of regional networks	General information about the pilot project(s) and the regional networks; promotion of values, damages and sustainable development of regional landscapes	Project Website, Newsletter, flyer, brochures, public information events, regional field trips, trans-national study tours
Local and regional economy, actors in small business and tourism	General information about the pilot project(s) and the regional networks; promotion of values, damages and sustainable development of regional landscapes	Newsletter, flyer, regional workshops and conferences, public information events, regional field trips
Local people/ inhabitants, landowners	General information about the pilot project(s) and the regional networks; promotion of values, damages and sustainable development of regional landscapes	Project Website, Newsletter, flyer, exhibitions, newspaper information campaigns, promotion films, guided landscape tours, public information events, regional field trips
Schools, teacher, pupils, adult educational institutions	Promotion of values, damages and sustainable development of regional landscapes; motivating pupils to participate in photo exhibition	Project Website, flyer, guided landscape tours, public information events, regional field trips, exhibitions, promotion films
Managers / authorities responsible for protected areas, park rangers of protected areas	General information about the pilot project(s) and the regional networks, with special regard to protected areas	Project Website, Newsletter, flyer, public information events
Visitors of protected (pilot) areas, tourists, leisure activists and sportsmen	General information about values, damages and sustainable development of landscapes in protected areas, with special focus on tourism and leisure activities	Flyer, guided landscape tours, exhibitions, promotion films

### c) Scientific and EU community

Target group	Information and communication needs	Suitable communication tools
Scientists, academic institutions, universities	New approaches to visualise and moderate landscape development scenarios	Project Website, Newsletter, brochures, final Project publication
Vocational training institutions	General information about values, damages and sustainable development of landscapes, with special focus on vocational needs	Project Website, Newsletter, brochures,
Students of different disciplines	General information about values, damages and sustainable development of landscapes, with special focus on new professional needs and opportunities; new approaches to visualise and moderate landscape development scenarios	Project Website, final Project publication
Young professionals at the beginning of their career	General information about values, damages and sustainable development of landscapes, with special focus on new professional needs and opportunities; new approaches to visualise and moderate landscape development scenarios	Project Website, Newsletter, trans-national study tours, final Project publication
Other EU projects in landscape development inside and outside Central Europe	General information about the Project	Project Website, flyer, Newsletter,
Geocaching community, people interested in New Media	New approaches to visualise and moderate landscape development scenarios	Project Website
Agenda 21 community, people engaged / interested in participatory processes	New approaches to visualise and moderate landscape development scenarios	Project Website

### **3 Description of tools and approaches**

To meet the ambitious and diverse communication and dissemination goals, the Project has developed and tested series of media related tools. Partially, these are traditional tools used by default in trans-national projects. However, their combination and the use in the context of landscape protection and development offers some innovative aspects as well. Furthermore, also new tools have been developed and implemented for the purposes of the VITAL LANDSCAPES project.

The main finding of the common media activities is: There is no single solution that perfectly fulfils all requirements. It largely depends from the local situation, the topics, the target groups and, last but not least, from the own resources. Therefore, the following description of tools used by the VITAL LANDSCAPES Project may serve as an impulse to own check needs and preconditions and to practice different media opportunities how to communicate best the topic of sustainable development of cultural landscapes in Central Europe.

#### **3.1 Traditional PR tools (press releases, press journeys, media events)**

The most usual instrument to communicate Project activities, events, outputs and results to the media are press releases, mostly distributed by Email. At the beginning of the Project, all PPs elaborated media contact lists that have been permanently updated and meanwhile contain some hundred media contacts. Thus, press releases have been sent to a wide range of selected media contacts. However, the resonance of these activities was often rather poor, above all in the starting phase of the Project.

What are the reasons of this missing attentiveness? First there have been general, 'more important' developments (like the financial and economic crisis in 2010) that hindered media attention to landscape related topics. However, also missing experiences or insufficient technical skills played an important role. After intensive discussions in the core team and respective adjustments in the daily media activities, the media coverage of project activities grew from month to month. The main experiences and recommendations from our side are the following:

##### **- Using a clear and interesting headline**

Journalists receive dozens of press releases per day. An interesting, may be provocation headline will help to make journalists reading the press release – a first step to a later report.

##### **- Working with pictures**

Landscape related topics may be combined with wonderful pictures. Adding one or two photos to the press release may be helpful to attract attention and, moreover, could ease the elaboration of an article. Since journalists always work under high pressure of time, such support might be very welcome and finally decide about the publication.

##### **- Focusing on a few activities**

Due to the lack of time journalists don't like complex issues and complicated stories. Therefore, a careful selection of key activities and the focus on a limited amount of information for media coverage is crucial for success.

**- Selecting a limited number of preferential media**

Today it's very easy to send press releases via Email to dozens or hundreds of recipients. Of course one should use this opportunity, hoping on a one-hit-wonder. However, it is highly recommended to focus on a limited number of media and to direct the attention to the respective journalists (e.g. by telephone calls shortly after having sent the press release via Email).

**- Building a personal relation**

To focus on a limited number of preferential media allows to build a personal relation to the respective journalists. One opportunity to stay in touch with a journalist is via SMS (mobile phone numbers are often online or can be obtained easily). Creating a relationship of trust (e.g. by inviting media representatives for a coffee) will be very helpful to place information in the respective media.

**- Offering exclusivity**

Offering exclusive information will make the story much more attractive, as no journalist wants to write an article that will be shared with all his competitors at the same time.

**- Combining landscape with further topics**

It might be that the overall development of landscapes is not a topic of key interest to the media. In such cases it might be helpful to look for related, more 'exciting' topics, e.g. destruction of a regional habitat, creation of new regional products, photo competition for school pupils.

**- Organizing Press journeys**

To communicate the activities of regional projects, VITAL LANDSCAPES made good experiences by organizing special press journeys to present innovative regional approaches. These journeys lasted 4 – 8 hours and offered intensive opportunities to establish individual contacts to the media and to sensitise journalists for the topic of integrative regional and landscape management.

### **3.2 Project Website**

Today, communication of project activities and results via Website is an everyday norm and required by the Central Europe Programme. However, Websites are built very different and often too complicated in content and structure. Since Websites are the main communication tool of the Project and communicate the activities and findings more detailed not only inside the partner regions but to the public all over Central Europe and beyond, the following experiences of the VITAL LANDSCAPES Project may be helpful:

**- Key information on the front page**

The Internet is a very fast communication medium. Therefore it is essential to catch the attention of the user during the first 3 – 5 seconds, otherwise he will 'escape'. Short, clear and interesting key messages on the front page are essential to bond the user and to lead them to further pages.

**- Clear structure, simple navigation**

Often Web designers are 'enamoured' of their product and build Websites wonderful looking, but difficult to handle. This might be no problem in a relatively fo-

cused community, but can hinder the communication to new target groups, e.g. in a pilot region and beyond.

#### - Short texts on the Website, longer information in a download / archive section

Websites fail if the user needs to scroll. Therefore, information on the screen should be as short as possible. Longer texts and additional information should be made available in a special section (downloads, archive).

#### - Working with pictures

VITAL LANDSCAPES made excellent experiences by using photos for all PR activities. This also concerns the Website where most of the photos taken by the project partners as well as results of the photo competitions are available in form of a slideshow.

#### - Permanent updating

A typical problem of many websites is 'archaic' information. Therefore, a permanent updating has to be guaranteed in any case. The VITAL LANDSCAPES Project combined the information of about updating with the edition of the quarterly Newsletter, thus stimulation the users to visit the Website anew.

#### - Provide information in native languages

Of course all relevant information of Central Europe Projects has to be published in English. However, this limits the regional acceptance. Therefore, the Website VITAL LANDSCAPES Website contains six Sub-Websites in German, Polish, Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Slovenian.

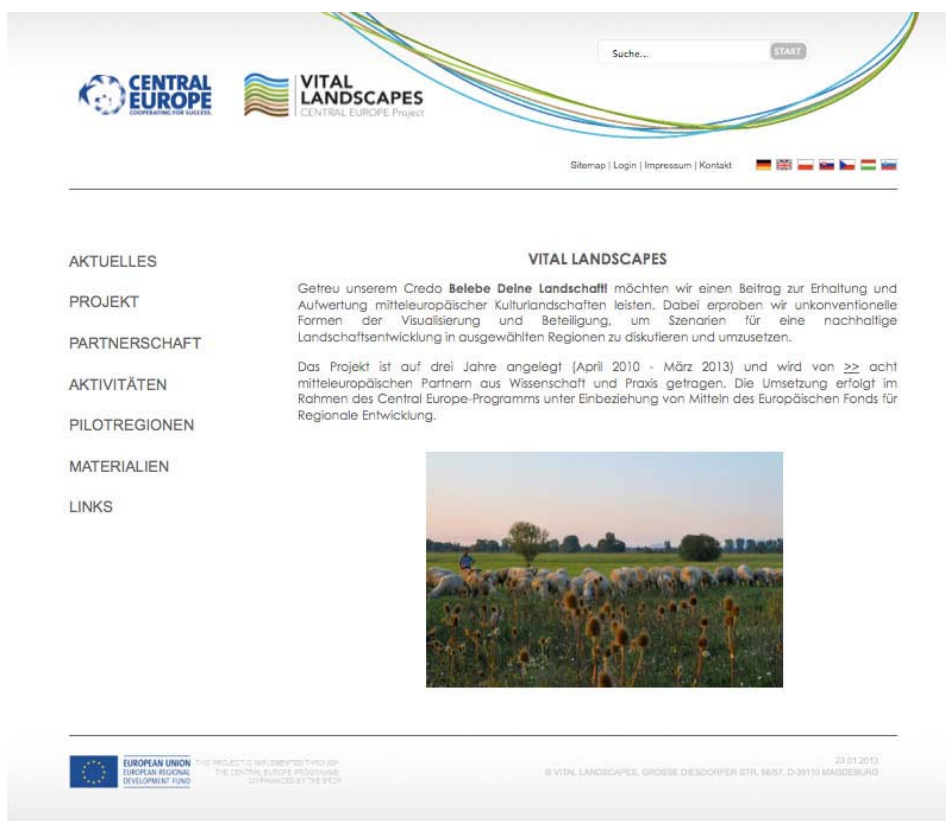


Fig. 1: VITAL LANDSCAPES main Website



## - Project brochures

In contrast to flyers and leaflets, brochures inform more detailed about project developments, content related issues, activities etc. Of course it is always good to have something 'hand-tight' to demonstrate the results of the work done. Moreover, also brochures may be printed in small runs. However, our experience in this case is that printed brochures mostly are dispensable. Instead, pdf documents at the download section of a Website are more flexible and more suitable to the information need of the users.



### VITAL LANDSCAPES

#### Sustainable Development of Landscapes in Central Europe using Innovative Participation and Visualisation Techniques

Cultural landscapes in Central Europe are of great value as evidence of our natural and cultural heritage and part of our common history. They are an important precondition for human well-being, quality of life and regional identity for residents and visitors alike. The economic and tourism potential of landscapes forms a source of sustainable regional development.

However, landscapes are endangered due to a lack of awareness, insensitive development and rapid change. Given the need to upgrade the technical infrastructure and to foster the economy, the sensitive development of the landscape is often neglected in practice. In addition, many rural areas suffer from population decline due to negative demographic trends and the outward migration of young people.

Further problems include the sectoral treatment of landscape issues and the poor coordination of different policy areas (especially agriculture, nature conservation, and economy). Regional approaches combining economic development and landscape protection, e.g. by involving decision

makers and stakeholders from different sectors are still quite rare in Central Europe. Simultaneously, inhabitants are only rarely involved in the development of 'their' landscape.

Since the year 2000, the European Landscape Convention has been trying to develop and coordinate effective measures for the protection of landscapes. However, its effectiveness in Central Europe has been rather limited to date. This applies similarly to the Territorial Agenda of the European Union adopted in 2006.

**VITAL LANDSCAPES** ([www.vital-landscapes.eu](http://www.vital-landscapes.eu)) was born out of a desire to overcome these deficits. Starting in April 2010 and lasting until March 2013, the Project is a joint initiative by eight project partners from seven countries with the common aim of promoting and supporting the sustainable development of cultural landscapes in Central Europe. The Project is financed largely by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) as part of the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme ([www.central2013.eu](http://www.central2013.eu)).



Der Landeshauptbund – insbesondere der Arbeitskreis Kulturlandschaften – befasst sich schon seit Längerem mit der Bestandsaufnahme und Entwicklung der Kulturlandschaft. Diese im Rahmen der Reihe „Kulturlandschaftselemente in Sachsen-Anhalt“ erschienene Broschüre führt über dreihundertfünfzig in unserem Bundesland vorkommende Elemente thematisch geordnet und mit kurzer Beschreibung auf. So kann sich jeder Interessierte einen Überblick über die Zeugnisse historischer und aktueller Landschaftsnutzung und -veränderung verschaffen. Der hier als Arbeitsstand vorliegende Katalog soll die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Thema „Kulturlandschaft“ anregen und den bürgerschaftlich Engagierten und lokalen Experten als Arbeitsmaterial dienen. Ergänzungen Ihrerseits nimmt der LHB jederzeit gern entgegen.

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Unter der unten aufgeführten Adresse erhalten Sie nach der für die Erfassung erforderlichen Dokumentenformulare.



Dieses Projekt wird im Rahmen des CENTRAL EUROPE Programms umgesetzt und durch EFRE-Ärztel kollektiviert. Gefördert durch das Land Sachsen-Anhalt.



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#### Katalog der Kulturlandschaftselemente



#### Kulturlandschaftselemente Sachsen-Anhalt.

Material zur Erfassung von Kulturlandschaftselementen



LANDESHAUPTBUND  
SACHSEN-ANHALT e.V.

Fig. 4: Front pages of different Project brochures

### 3.4 Project Newsletter

Similar like the Project Website, a periodical Newsletter is required by the Central Europe Programme to spread information directly to pre-defined target groups. In the VITAL LANDSCAPES Project a common newsletter disseminated the Project results to associated partners, stakeholders, professionals and decision makers in the participating regions and beyond. The Newsletters have been published every three months. The following experiences made by the Project may be highlighted:

#### - Special topics beyond the Project activities

Any edition of the Newsletter was dedicated to a special topic (e.g. education, new EU funding period, visualisation), thus providing not only project-related messages but also useful further information. Our impression was that thereby much more people used the Newsletter und thus became informed about Project activities.

#### - Combining Newsletter with updating of the Website

One main aim of the Newsletter was to make the readers looking at the Website. Therefore, all Newsletter have been timely closely connected with the regular updates of the Project Website.

#### - Shared responsibility of different Project partners

Although the Lead Partner resp. the communication manager was mainly responsible to prepare and edit the Newsletters, also other partners have been involved, mostly related to topic close to their project activities. Finally, the partner in charge was presented in detail on the last page.

#### - Publishing Newsletters in native languages

The main language of the newsletter is English. However, to achieve a bigger regional impact all partners translated the Newsletters into their national language and organises the regional / national distribution in their home countries.



Fig. 5: Front pages of VITAL LANDSCAPES Newsletters

### 3.5 (Web-based) photo exhibition

Part of the VITAL LANDSCAPES Project was a common photo exhibition as well as several regional photo exhibitions about values and challenges of cultural landscapes in CE (with special focus to pilot project regions). The exhibitions have been presented via Internet (see [www.vital-landscapes.eu](http://www.vital-landscapes.eu)) and physically on public places (like town halls) in the participating regions. Additionally, the numerous wonderful photos have been used to publish a common project calendar.

The experiences with these exhibitions and the pictures in general have been excellent in all respects. Of course photos are the most basic tool for landscape planners to get information about an area, to record the state and to survey. The photos are much more understandable for professionals and lay-people too. They can demonstrate the state of landscapes, the landscape processes and the people-landscape relationships. The photos are capable to fix present state of the area and to compare past with present perspectives and states. Photos are easily to take, even by children and young people. And last but not least: Photos, at least the good ones, are probably the best 'ambassadors' of the landscape, influencing not only the mind but also the heart of the viewer.

To demonstrate the encouraging experiences and the opportunities of this tool, we focus in the following on the activities of PP6 (Corvinus University Budapest/Hungary). PP6 organised a web-based photo competition in the pilot area. To realise this online competition PP6 developed a special module on Vital Berek website, called 'Photo Berek' (<http://www.e-berek.hu/fotok>). The users could upload photos to this platform; the visitors could see and vote on them on this user interface. The competition was called 'My Nagyberek' (Nagyberek is the name of the Hungarian pilot area).

The **innovative aspects in photo exhibition** were:

- An online photo gallery was created available on the website.
- A photo competition was organised, and local people were motivated to experience their landscapes in photos.
- A voting period was opened when the most valuable photos were selected.

The competitors could upload photos in three different categories:

- **Nature Berek** (photos of nature, flora and fauna of the pilot area);
- **Most beautiful Berek** (photos of beautiful landscapes of the pilot area);
- **People Berek** (photos of people, culture, costumes of the pilot area).

The process of the photo competition from the beginning till the end was divided into **three main parts**:

- The **first period** was the 'Local Marketing of the Competition' phase in 2011 May-June. In this period we informed the local people, the local organisation like primary schools and the municipalities about the website and the photo competition. We asked them to promote this event.
- The **second period** was 'The online competition' period 2011 June-2011 September. In this phase the competitors could upload photos to the website. Only the registered users could use this function, so first they needed to register. After the registration they could upload three photos to each category. During this period they could change the uploaded photos at any time. The uploaded photos were appearing continually at website

- The **third period** was the “Voting period” and it took 2011 September-2011 October. In this phase on the website the visitors of the website could vote on photos in a five star system. The results were born by summarising of visitors’ votes and professionals jury’s votes. After the summarising the award ceremony was held in February 2012 in the Pilot Area.

**"Az Én Nagyberekem" fotópályázat díjazottjai** a beérkezett és a bizottság szavazatai alapján:

	<b>Természet Berek</b>	<b>Legszebb Berek</b>	<b>M-Berek</b>
<b>1. díj</b>	Kócsag (Újváryné Szabó Márta)	Boróca (Marosi János)	Vágni lehet a nádat (Tóth Csaba)
<b>2. díj</b>	Horgászsodálkozás (Balázs Ottó)	Ködös reggel (Millei Csaba)	Táskai legelő (Ilácsa József)
<b>3. díj</b>	Fehérvízi láp (Ilácsa József)	Tatárvár (Tóth Csaba)	Aratás Csisztapusztán (Járfás Zsuzsanna)
<b>Különdíj</b>	Barátrécék (Nagy Ádám)	Naplemente (Gál Zoltán Milán)	Szüret (Szellő Gábor)

A díjazottaknak gratulálunk, a díjátadásról hamarosan értesítjük őket!



Fehérvízi láp (Ilácsa József)



Boróca (Marosi János)



Vágni lehet a nádat (Tóth Csaba)



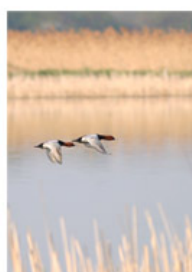
Horgászsodálkozás (Balázs Ottó)



Aratás Csisztapusztán (Járfás Zsuzsanna)



Ködös reggel (Millei Csaba)



Barátrécék (Nagy Ádám)



Naplemente (Gál Zoltán Milán)



Kócsag (Újváryné Szabó Márta)



Táskai legelő (Ilácsa József)



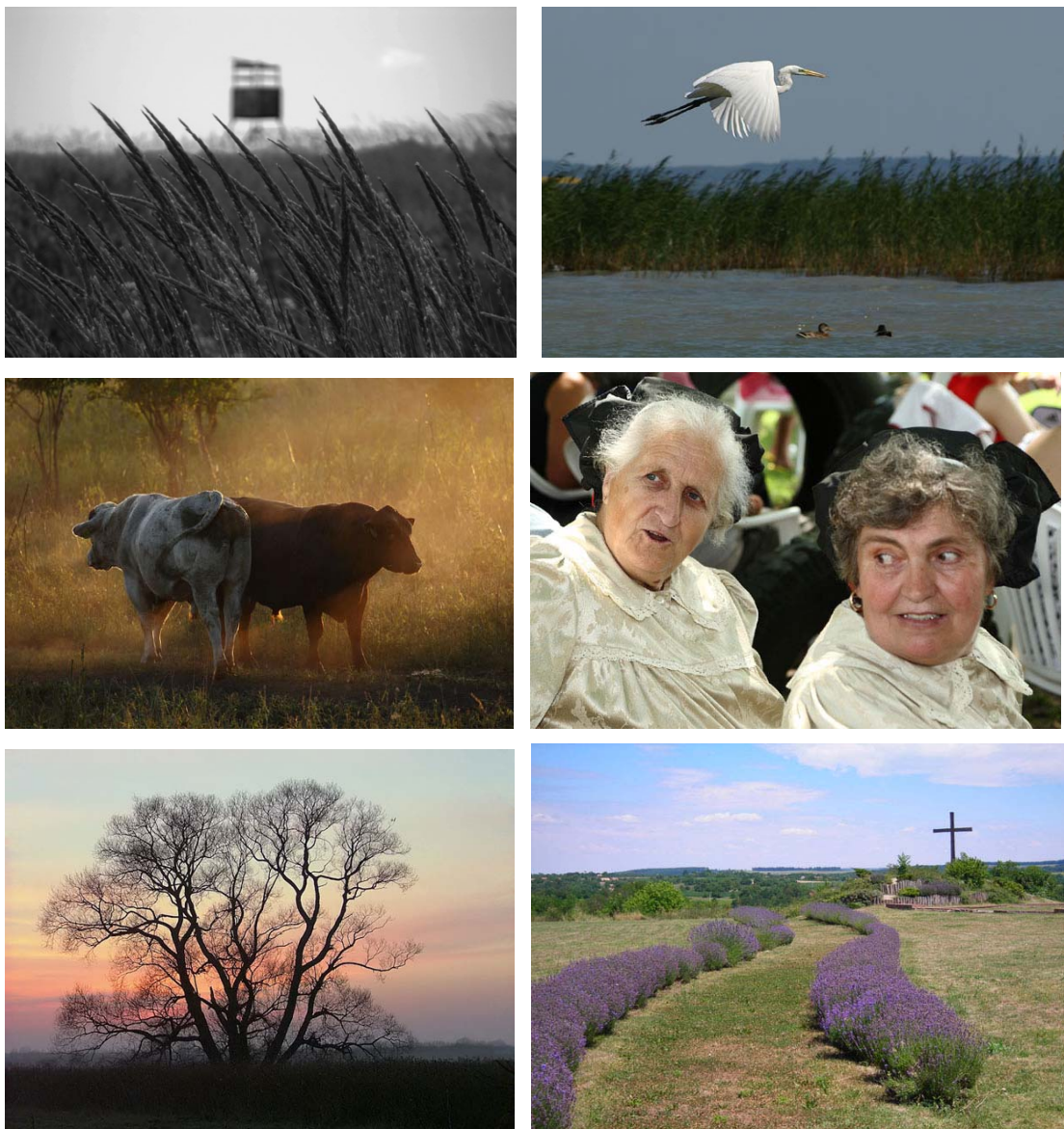
Tatárvár (Tóth Csaba)



Szüret (Szellő Gábor)

Fig. 6: The winners of web-based Photo competition in the Hungarian pilot region

The biggest advantage for the partnership and the pilot area were the many beautiful photos of the pilot landscape. Information of values and tradition of locals appeared on these images in good quality and nice composition. The best photos could be used, and published in brochures, publications, calendar and on the website as well. These results strengthened the project popular among local people.



*Fig. 7: Other photos of competition 'My Nagyberek'*

The competition was available only for registered users, but anybody could see the uploaded pictures and anybody could vote on them. Due to this competition **and as a result of the innovative online solution PP6 experienced that:**

- Inhabitants of pilot area got to know the project and the pilot area website.
- The event drew attention to the website and its goals, its functions.
- The competition activated local people, and formed the circle of regular visitors.
- Local people became interested in landscape scenery natural values and heritage, and traditional way of living in the landscape.
- Local stakeholders became interested in the photo award ceremony and the results of the competition.
- Organisers received many photos capable for publication about the pilot area.

### 3.6 Promotion films: Vitalisation of pilot landscapes

Another media tool used by the Project have been movies. Originally, it was planned to produce two professional promotion films (in national languages with subtitles in English) to inform about the common value of cultural landscapes in Central Europe and their preservation by sustainable development. These relatively cost-intensive movies have been produced by the Polish partner Agricultural University Krakow and the Slovenian partner Luz d.d. (available via Project Website [www.vital-landscapes.eu](http://www.vital-landscapes.eu)). Both films have been very useful in the daily work in the pilot region and beyond, communicating activities and 'philosophy' of the project to different target groups / institutions like regional stakeholders, mayors, schools, regional TV, public events etc.

Furthermore, the Slovenian partner Luz d.d. used the experience of the professional film studio in charge with the promotion film to organise respective pupils workshops. In consequence, four additional short films have been produced by school pupils, with really impressing results and often surprising views on the pilot region. Last but not least: The production of the film largely contributed to connect young people much closer with their native region, making use of their interest and capability to work with new media.

Influenced and motivated by this success, also other Project partners (PP2, PP3, PP6) decided to use the medium film to communicate landscapes and regions. In all these cases, films have been produced with simple equipment and low budget. In the Hungarian pilot area, students have been involved into the film production. In the Austrian pilot region, pupils even used mobile phones to produce several movies – even these results are of astonishing quality and very inspiring.

All in all, the following experiences may be highlighted: Films usually have the essence to present something in movement, in changes to show activities and transformation. A promotion film presenting a pilot landscape and its development provides many information especially for lay-people, local stakeholders, visitors, tourists. A film usually introduces the area's conditions, landscape elements and features, the lifestyle of people living there but it can show the actual development project related topic as well. It presents easily the actual states, genius loci, conflicts, goals, solutions, results. The type and nature of the film mostly depends on the goal and the target group in the director's mind.

In the case of a promotion film the following requirements have to be fulfilled:

- **Informative:** The film must communicate enough, but not too much about the area or/and the project. With too much information and length the film cannot be understood and can be boring.
- **Exciting:** It is important to create an energetic and to attract the attention. Suitable sounds or music should be chosen, the view, the imagery, and other film effects like special camera positions are necessary. These effects have to fit to the main goals and the feeling of the film.
- **Concentrate on movements:** film is the only tool that can show action and transformation in real time.
- **Language:** A promotion film is made basically for non-experts. Thus the use of scientific language should be avoided. The text has to be understandable for laymen.
- **Experience:** All in all, the goal is to enjoy the film and to provide new experience.

In the following, we will describe more detailed the respective experiences of PP6 (Corvinus University Budapest/Hungary). Corvinus University prepared a seven minutes long promotion film about the 'Vital Lakeshore' field trip. The film presents a student's field work in a development process that concentrates on the revitalisation of lakeshore areas of Pilot Landscape Nagyberek. The focus of the film is landscape architect student's preparatory activity to lakeshore planning process of the local town management of Fonyód. The students prepared surveys (plants and pathways) and made interviews with locals and tourists visiting the area. It was a live plan preparatory activity. This project was combined with a field trip and two workshops, where they got know the pilot area's landscape features, visited important characteristics and worked on two focus area of the pilot territory holding discussions with local stakeholders.

This 'Vital Lakeshore' student field work project focused on two important areas of the pilot territory:

- Revitalisation of the main Beach in Fonyód;
- Renewal of 'Panorama Promenade'.

The film presents the basic steps of the work: the field surveys, the lectures, the presentations, the interviews and finally the results - the plans. The main goal was to present the pilot activity of students, but also to provide a first glance in some typical characteristics of the pilot area. Besides the facts the film shows student's impressions, opinions about the work and the presentations of teachers, experts and local stakeholders. The film gives enough information about the area and the activities, but not too scientific and quite exciting and funky to be enjoyable for anyone.

The promotion film is **innovative** in some concern as

- it is available on youtube, and on the website (<http://www.e-berek.hu>).
- The students and young professionals are the actors and the directors of the film at the same time
- The subject of the film is the activity of the students as part of a concrete planning process.
- The film presents a very focused, live, rapid planning process at the conceptualising phase in the pilot landscape Nagyberek.

#### **As a result of innovative solutions PP6 experienced that**

- People became interested in the products of the project.
- The products of the project were interesting to media.
- The participants felt that the process what they participated in is documented and can be presented any other time, this way their participation successful.
- It is available also on youtube: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOnCXR15MYo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOnCXR15MYo)



Fig. 8: Pictures from the Vital lakeshore promotion film



Fig. 9: School pupils producing a movie in the Slovenian pilot region Ljubljanske Barje

### 3.7 Newspaper information campaign

To reach a really broad public, an information campaign by inserts in daily newspapers was executed by PP5 in the Czech pilot region (Sumava Biosphere Reserve), focusing on inhabitants of the Biosphere Reserve, and by PP7 in the City of Krakow/Poland, focussing on inhabitants of an urban area (users of the landscapes around Krakow). The common aim was to sensitise ordinary people about the values of their regional cultural landscapes and inform about the overall and regional Project activities. Different from press releases, TV / broadcast interviews and other media activities, this campaigns enabled to express directly the opinion of the respective PP and to highlight directly problems, activities and visions.

Unfortunately, there was no money planned in the application form to finance polls on the success and impact of such newspaper campaigns. However, the numerous feedbacks of quite different people in both cases prove a certain success: Landscape has become an interesting topic for at least some people, and new contacts in the regions concerned could be established. This holds true above all in the Czech pilot region that suffers from administrative disregard and missing regional identity.

On the other side, inserts in daily newspapers are comparatively expensive, and the impact is rather accidentally and limited to the day of publication. Thus, this tool may be recommended only in very special cases (e.g. in the case of urgent communication needs like in the Sumava Biosphere Reserve that cannot be met otherwise).



Fig. 10: Special edition of regional newspaper Doma na Sumave

### 3.8 Guided landscape tours / education of culture landscape guides

Landscape is everywhere around us. Therefore, everybody seems to be familiar with landscapes, at least he/she believes so. In practice, the knowledge about our surrounding environment is rather poor, and only few people are able to perceive cultural landscape elements and landscape changes. Therefore, the VITAL LANDSCAPES project developed special curricula for landscape guides and practiced guided excursions and field trips with different target groups. Of course, one may ask if this activity may be called a 'media activity'. In the classical meaning surely no – but if we look at the main task of a medium (to transport information from a 'sender' to a 'recipient'), also the guide who spreads information directly by his explanations to a group of people executes a kind of media activity. Particularly in the case of landscape development this direct contact seems important.

The public regional field trips (thematic excursions) communicated historical and actual developments, best practice projects and regional challenges to regional stakeholders and local people. They have been organised in the framework of regional pilot projects and largely supported the formation and the work of regional networks of stakeholders, administrations and local experts.

The precondition to do so was a new curriculum to train cultural landscape guides according to European standards. This activity consists of 2 x 80hrs. of lectures and enabled to communicate the beauty and diversity of landscapes to tourists and other target groups (e.g. school classes), with special focus on historical cultural elements.



Fig. 11: Regional excursions, directed by cultural landscape guides

#### 4 Summary, recommendations and outlook

According to the European Landscape Convention, 'to increase awareness among the civil society, private organisations, and public authorities of the value of landscapes, their role and changes of them' is one of the preconditions and key elements of sustainable landscape development all over Europe. In that sense, the tools developed by the VITAL LANDSCAPES Project enable to meet quite different information and communication needs of different target groups. They may ease further communication and PR activities of the partners involved and beyond, help to identify key elements of the common issue (Central European cultural landscapes as a common value, opportunities to combine the preservation of landscapes with economic development, and practical approaches to develop alternative solutions by using innovative methods to visualise regional development scenarios) and to develop strategies to communicate these key elements by different media on regional, national and CE level.

Generally spoken, all tools described in this media strategy are ready to apply for other users as well (e.g. governmental and non-governmental organisations dealing with CL protection and development; local, regional and national administrations; managers/authorities responsible for protected areas; people engaged in ELC implementation; local/regional/national media). By these recommendations we hope to encourage and enable these target groups to use the media more intensively and more professionally to sensitise ordinary people, regional stakeholders and decision makers to the topic. Further information about the tools described above is available free of charge via Internet (see [www.vital-landscapes.eu](http://www.vital-landscapes.eu)).

Professional PR activities and the use of diverse media approaches is one key precondition to ensure sound and more conscious landscape management in future – according to the key messages key messages of the VITAL LANDSCAPES Project:

*(1) Cultural landscapes in Central Europe are of great value ...*

- *as evidence of our natural and cultural heritage and part of our (common) history.*
- *as a precondition for human well-being, quality of life and regional identity.*
- *as a source of important economic and tourism potential.*

*(2) However, landscapes are endangered due to a lack of regard and awareness, and insensitive and rapid change.*

*(3) Vitalize your landscape! We are all part of our landscape and its development. The face of our future landscapes depends on us!*





