

INTRODUCTION

Marche is a small region in the central part of Italy, located on the Adriatic Sea in front of Croatia, with almost 1.600.000 inhabitants divided in 245 Municipalities. Many of them are really small and the Capital city of the region has almost 100.000 inhabitants. Persons are mainly employed in the manufacturing sector but till some decades ago they were employed in agricultural sector.

Since the beginning of the new century the touristic sector increased importance and visibility but the most relevant development was from 2008 when the international and national economic crises reduced the manufacturing productive capacity of almost 30% and the employment in those sectors. Currently Marche region Public Administration and local Municipalities are strongly concentrated to support and promote the development of touristic sector like a potential source of economic development, of employment opportunities.

1.- Analysis of the destination and visitor profile

The average profile of tourists visiting Marche region are families with children, statistical sources estimate four persons, and the average stay in for seven days (six nights). The main attractive tourism "product" is the sea, the beaches. Marche region has almost 176 km of costs, 99% of them with sand and without rocks, like all the Western Adriatic coast on the contrary of the Eastern which has mainly rocks and stones. There are no data about the average visitors per year of Astrotourism.

Other tourist products are Cultural basins (Ancona was born more than 2400 years ago, it was the port from which the Roman armies started to conquer old Dacia and Balkans), Urbino a wonderful middle age city where the famous "Madonna with child" painter Raffaello Sanzio was born, or Pesaro where Gioacchino Rossini, the author and musician of "Barber of Sevilla", was born, studied and worked.

Due to the long and qualified agricultural sector and related products and outputs (wine, traditional food, hand made fresh pasta, cakes) Marche region is exploiting also such a touristic niche with a "Mix Supply" of different products, services, solution and destination. Marche is the region where native live longer than all European regions: they call it "Quality of Life".

All the infrastructures answer to the criteria of "accessibility", "usability", "easy to access and easy to use". They answer to the criteria of "Design for All". They don't have barriers for disabled persons.

2.- Analysis of the tourism supply

Astrotourism initiatives and supply services in Marche region are provided all over the region and are organized around the local Observatories and Planetarium. The Astro Associations and Clubs are very active but due to their limited financial resources they organize and provide services mainly during summer season.

The main activities and services provided in Marche about Astrotourism come from the Education for Boy Scout, students, teachers and interested persons, cultural and entertainment events. All the observatories and planetarium are accessible and usable also for disabled persons. Tourist can access Marche region by boat (Port of Ancona where every year more than one million of tourists go through), the national network of Railways, the international airport "Raffaello Sanzio" of Ancona-Falconara, and the national Motorway.

There are also accommodations tourism – related. Hotels, rooms, campings and other tourist accommodation are available for all types of tourism not only or specifically for Astro tourists. Usually cultural events are organized during the events (i.e. music performances, reading of classical books, poetries, etc.). As previously said during previous meetings (Tenerife and Thessaloniki) in Marche region Astro tourism is a well integrated "niche" of the tourism market.

All Astro Associations and Clubs in Marche region have their own web pages which are constantly updated and they are in close contact, in network, also with the web sites of the national associations and Scientific Institutions. Such an approach provides the opportunity to be constantly informed and updated about the events and initiatives organized at regional and national level.

We have a variety of channels to supply the initiatives, events and services. From the traditional paper based ones (flyers, leaflets, posters) till local radios and televisions, till web sites. But they aren't sold, they are provided free of charge.

The resources allocated to Astrotourism in Marche region are consistent because we can find nine observatories and one Planetarium (private). Such infrastructures are mainly devoted to educational purposes and aims are not for profit.

During summer period a lot of educational, recreational, cultural and entertainments events are organized by Astro clubs and Associations all over the region. Many of these are connected with presentation of food local typical products (i.e. wines, cakes, traditional plates, etc).

Finally there is no starlight certification or similar ones and there are no degree of protection of the destination.

3.- Analysis of the tourist demand

There are no datas available to inform about average visitors per year that perform astrotourism in Marche and about the evolution of visits in the last three years. The profile of the tourist who engages in Astrotourism - related activities are mainly Boy Scout, students, teachers, classrooms of students and related families but the larger number are tourists, Italian and foreign, that are spending their holidays in the costs and in the places close to the Observatories and Planetarium.