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The European Summer School of Tourism Sciences VALORTUR in Paris

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The European Summer School of Tourism Sciences VALORTUR is an intensive training course about the "Touristic valorisation of environmental and cultural resources, that gathers together classes and lectures, guided excursions, round tables, seminars and fieldworks. This international program has been created in 2010 by the Università di Cassino (Italy), in cooperation with the Université de Paris I "Panthéon Sorbonne" (France) and the Universidad de Valencia (Spain) and is one of the Lifelong Learning Programme Erasmus. Participants to the project are University professors, researchers and students from Bachelor's Degree and Masters Courses. They are required to speak their mother tongues and at the same time understand the other ones as an intercommunication perspective among Romanic languages. Twenty-five students and twenty University professors (five for each University) have taken part to the first edition of this Summer School, held in Terracina from 27th June to 11th July 2010. The program included ten specialising lessons about Tourism Economy and Marketing, Tourism Statistics, Tourism Legislation, Mountain Tourism and so on.

The second edition of 2011 took place in Paris from 9th to 21st July and, for the first time, the Università di Bologna collaborated thanks to its faculties in Tourism Economy (Bachelor Degree) and Tourism Economy and Management of Rimini multi campus (Master of Science). Though there were no students from the French University, sixteen students - twelve Italians and four Spanish- attended the classes. The teaching staff was composed of several professors: seven from the Università di Cassino, two from Alma Mater Studiorum di Bologna, five of Universidad de Valencia, six from Université Paris I "Panthéon Sorbonne" and two guest professors, one from the Université Paris IV and one from the École Nationale Supérieure de Paysage de Versailles. A total of eighty hours courses were held, most of which were lectures in the University halls of Sorbonne and IREST (Institut de Recherche et d'Etudes Supérieures du Tourisme) while the other ones were TD terrain on stage. The topics covered ranged over a wide variety of subjects: from the tourism valorization through Internet to mental maps, from tourists statistics to quality certifications of tourist accommodation, from museum tourism to marketing and management of touristic destinations.

On another side, the TD terrain focused on the touristic valorization and urban requalification of suburban areas.

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Following, a description for each excursion.

The Domaine National de Versailles is one of the most famous cultural places in the world. Once there, a discussion about marketing strategies to capture the new typologies of post modern tourists and the relationship between the castle and the village of Versailles was covered.

The Marais, Paris historical neighbourhood, which has largely over the last years evolved going through various phases: from real seat to popular area.

Nowadays the Marais is one of Paris most popular areas both for tourists and citizens.

Saint Denis, a little village at the gates of Paris, is famous for the Stade de France. The current aim of the local City Administration is to sensitize the citizens particularly about urban regeneration and environmental improvements, enhancing his image of *banlieu* and opening up to cultural tourism, also thanks to its cathedral and to the Parc de la Légion d'Honneur. Moreover, Saint Denis has promoted "La Plaine Commune", an urban development project that involves eight villages in the surroundings of Paris: its goal is to divert touristic flows out of Paris.

The TD terrain highlighted two different aspects of the same city: the touristic one and the popular one.

Moreover, students were involved in the Fête de la République Française and played an active role during the celebrations.

The cité-jardin de Stains is another city of Paris suburbs. It was created as a popular area built thanks to a massive social housing policy for Paris workers in order to improve their living conditions. Since it is now part of "La Plaine Commune", the municipality wants to restore urban spaces and give more services to the community such as schools, gyms and so on.

The Défense was an industrial district in the north of Paris that has now become a worldwide- known business district. In the late years, thanks to various modern works of art placed in the main square, it has become a *plein air museum* and a cultural tourism destination.

Shopping tourism. TD terrain has underlined the relationship between consumption and tourism through shopping activity. The tour was done in the most famous Paris shopping streets, travelling across the itineraries proposed by "Shopping Book" editing by *Paris Office du Tourisme et des Congrès*.

In another TD terrain, this time without guide, students had the possibility to deepen their city knowledge through different activities. Some of them went to the most important Paris museums like Louvre, Musée d'Orsay, Musée Cluny and Centre Pompidou, some to the flea market and some other to Disneyland. At the end of the day they all gathered behind Montmartre Cathedral, where they spent their evening.

VALORTUR girls that had already been to Paris, took advantage over the few free moments after courses to chaperon their fellow travellers -who were in the French capital for the first time- across the most important monuments, districts and places that must be seen when in Paris.

VALORTUR team organised two dinners to encourage socialization and intercommunication among all the students in two typical Parisian restaurants: Le Bouillon Chartier and Au Bon Coin.

Le Bouillon Chartier is a historical restaurant in Liberty style, which has - over the decades- always been appreciated by many celebrities and just as many anonymous people. Having a dinner here means to empathize with Parisian lifestyle. The staff is nice and helpful and takes the order on the table covers.

Au Bon Coin is a traditional small Parisian restaurant with a menu offering variations of classic French dishes, that are displayed on blackboards around the restaurant. The staff is friendly and very helpful. The local is often full, so it is recommended to book in advance because Parisians eat there regularly too.

In conclusion, the Summer School has been a good choice both for studying and as a travelling destination.

The experience was very intense because the whole project was made at a very hectic pace. The courses took place from 9 a.m. to 19 p.m. and on some days both lectures and TD terrain were held. Plus, Paris rainy weather did not help.

Moreover, since the female students were accommodated in Fondation Hellénique in the Cité Universitaire in southern Paris, it was necessary take bus and metro to reach the University in the city centre.

From a more academic point of view, different kinds of teaching methods emerged: Spanish professors tried to involve the girls with discussions, Italian ones had a more traditional and academic approach, while -during the guided excursions- the French tended to consider students like a passive audience without encouraging students' intercommunication.

Concerning the classes, there were some differences between the female students because they came from various degree courses (some from humanistic areas, some from economy areas and then some from touristic areas), creating some difficulties in the comprehension of the specific subjects.

Because of the total absence of French students and the prevalence of Italians, the intercommunication was a little insufficient, since the Spanish students spoke Italian.

Overall, this experience has been also positive because it made it possible to meet University professors from different countries always willing to give explanations, advices or course material to students, in order to write their final papers. The courses vastly contributed to increase the value of the Summer School, thanks to the prestige of the *Université de Paris I "Panthéon Sorbonne"* - one of the most ancient in the world- and the reputation of the IREST (l'Institut de Recherche et d'Études Supérieures du Tourisme), affiliated to the World Tourism Organization.

Plus, many expenses were also already covered for the participants – except meal allowances- of VALORTUR for example social activities, public transport seasonal tickets, museum pass and accommodation at the *Fondation Hellenique*. Social activities, in particular, contributed to create a cohesive group, in which participators were really integrated. In fact, students created a climate of confidence among them thus establishing future friendly relationships and they also got to know their University professors in a different and less formal way, not only like professionals.

Lectures and TD have increased cultural background of all the participants. Particularly, thanks to TD, students have discovered a new image of Paris, focusing on new and unknown amenities outside the traditional touristic itineraries.

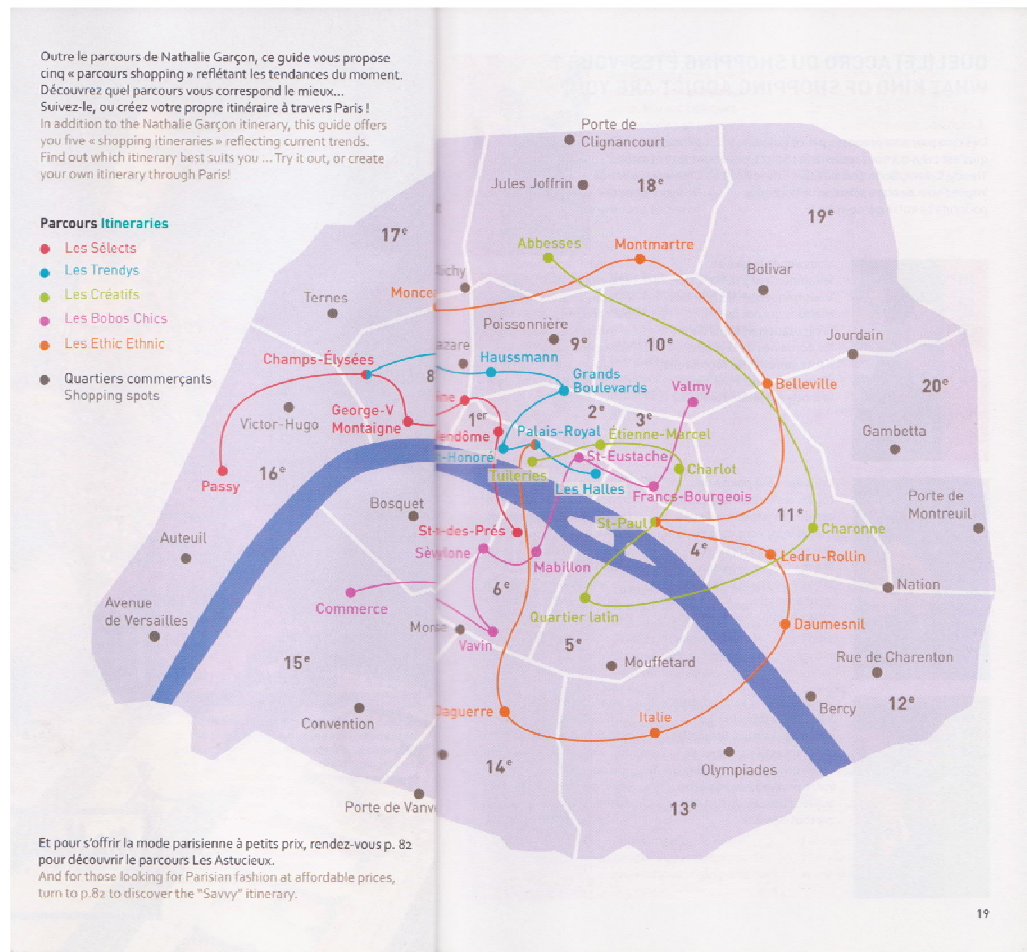
At the end of these twelve days spent in Paris, the Summer School VALORTUR 2011 resulted as an intensive and positive experience, despite its application costs for all the participators.



Pict. 1: While waiting to enter the palace of Versailles.



Pict. 2: Two hours to enter the palace of Versailles



Pict. 3: Shopping itineraries in Paris



Pict. 4: The garden of Versailles



Pict. 5: The Fondation Hellenic in the Cité Universitaire (Paris)



Pict. 6: IREST (Paris1, Panthéon-Sorbonne)



Pict. 7: The garden city of Stains (Saint Denis, Paris)



Pict. 8: The Defense (Paris)



Pict. 9: Together at the restaurant (Paris)



Pict. 10: Together in Rimini