

AlmaTourism

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The 5th Scientific Workshop of the Italian Society of Tourism Sciences, Rimini, November 29-30, 2013

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The 5th Scientific Workshop of SISTUR (Italian Society of Tourism Sciences, <http://www.sistur.net>) was held on November 29-30 in Rimini, and organized by the Higher School of Tourism Sciences of the University of Bologna and by the degree programme in Economics of Tourism (offered by the same university in its Rimini campus), with the support of Uni.Rimini SPA.

SISTUR has been established in 2009 as an association of university professors and tourism experts that aims at promoting the diffusion of tourism studies at the national and international level, with a focus both on research and education. In line with the aim and scope of the association, this annual event saw the participation of scholars who are active in several scientific disciplines, such as history, economics, geography, management and statistics. Overall, 72 contributions, organized in 19 parallel sessions, has been selected through an open call for papers. The themes of the parallel sessions well exemplify the variety of perspective in tourism studies, including environmental sustainability, use and diffusion of new technologies, architecture and urban studies for tourism, cultural tourism, economics and marketing of tourism destinations, economic crises and tourism development.

Distinctive features of the association are testified by a number of events held during the conference. First, the attention to the international research community led to the opening plenary lecture by Pranvera Resulaj, professor at University of Valona, who presented an interesting contribution on the impact of tourism in the Albanian economy. Moreover, some of the works were presented in English by non-Italian colleagues. Second, the importance attached to education is well represented by the two prizes given to the best

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dissertations on tourism discussed in Italian universities. Finally, two events were devoted to policymaking and practitioners, that is the plenary lecture held by Andrea Babbi, now head of ENIT, the Italian Agency for tourism, and the round table on Rimini and Forlì experience in managing European projects on tourism.

As it is always the case, it is clearly difficult to summarize all the contributions and the lessons learnt from such a rich event. Overall, it seems fair to claim that most works were concerned with the unifying concept of tourism destination, seen both as the centre of tourists' experience and the locus where the interaction of private and public actors builds the tourism product. Once more, tourism confirms itself as an area of human activity paying simultaneously a great deal of attention to the past, i.e. to traditions and heritage, and to the future as well, with the increasingly important role played by new technologies in the relations involving tourism service providers and in the tourists experience. It is all this that makes it such an exciting (and relevant) area of research.