

## **USPEE „CONSTANTIN STERE” PARTICIPATED IN THE FIRST TRAINING WITHIN ENRICHER – HUBS PROJECT, IN THE CITY OF KUTAISI, GEORGIA**

As part of the Erasmus+ project, ENRICHER - hubs initiative „*Designing Green Tourism Concepts through Learning*”, the first training session was held under the theme „*Sustainable Thinking – Theories and Frameworks of Sustainable Tourism, Stakeholder Engagement, SDGs, Business and Destination Case Studies.*” The training took place from October 1–4, 2024, at Akaki Tsereteli State University (ATSU) in Kutaisi, Georgia. This was an excellent opportunity for professors from the Republic of Moldova and Georgia to become familiar with sustainable tourism concepts and tourism service design.

The first day began with a welcome speech from the Rector of ATSU, Shalva Kirtadze, who emphasized the importance of collaboration among partner universities as a key factor in promoting sustainable development in the tourism sector.



Shalva Kirtadze  
(Rector of ATSU, Kutaisi)



Project Trainers

Next, the project trainers gave their welcome remarks. It is worth noting that the project partners include Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (HHUAS) in Helsinki, Finland, which is the consortium coordinator and general manager of the ENRICHER-hubs project. Other participating institutions include the University of Genoa in Italy and the Management Center Innsbruck Internationale Hochschule GmbH in Austria. From Moldova, two more universities are involved: Moldova State University and Comrat State University. Additionally, the consortium includes three universities from Georgia: Caucasus University, Akaki Tsereteli State University (ATSU), and Iakob Gogebashvili Telavi State University.

During the first day, participants followed an intensive program that included sessions introducing the topic of tourism, the history of sustainability, and its impact on the tourism industry.

In the following days of the training, participants took part in intensive lessons, interactive workshops, and discussions that facilitated the exchange of good practices and innovative ideas. This training had a significant impact on improving participants' knowledge, helping them to develop competencies in designing tourism services and businesses. Thus, the training contributed to creating a favorable framework for applying sustainability concepts in tourism, encouraging an integrated and responsible approach to the development of the sector.



Throughout the week, participants and trainers worked together in intensive training sessions, sharing perspectives and experiences on various topics related to sustainability in tourism. These included: the importance of tourism for development and sustainability, the impact of tourism, stakeholder involvement, trends and evolving consumer behavior in tourism, as well as best practices from the European Union and other current issues. Interactive group work was frequently used throughout these training sessions.



Outside the classroom, our host university, ATSU, organized two study visits to protected areas that promote sustainable tourism: Sataplia Cave and Motsameta Monastery. Sataplia Cave hosts some of the best-preserved dinosaur footprints in the world, offering a fascinating glimpse into prehistoric life. It also features impressive stalactites and stalagmites formed by geological processes over millennia. The area surrounding the cave is home to diverse plant and animal species, contributing to regional biodiversity. The cave is part of an ecological park with hiking trails, viewing platforms, and other visitor facilities, all promoting sustainable tourism. The second visit took the group to Motsameta Monastery, a traditional historical site.





In conclusion, the first training session organized in Kutaisi was a valuable experience for both participants and trainers, focusing on essential topics in sustainable tourism. The intensive sessions facilitated the exchange of knowledge and best practices, covering subjects such as the importance of tourism for development, stakeholder involvement, and current trends in consumer behavior. This training not only enriched participants' knowledge but also laid the foundation for future collaborations between the participating universities, with a positive impact on the development of the tourism sector in the represented regions.



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