

Development of Ecotouristic Activities in the Balkan Botanic Garden of Kroussia and the surrounding areas

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The participants were involved in a set of different activities (round table discussions, creative workshops, experiential games, field visits, eco-paths and cultural evenings). One of the major targets of the Balkan Botanic Garden of Kroussia is the development of ecotouristic activities in the Garden itself, as well as in the surrounding areas. Having in mind that over the past years the nearby villages are declining in population and overall development due to domestic urban pull and immigration, ecotourism can be an interesting alternative in order for this situation to reverse. One action towards that direction is the hosting of the Youth Exchange Program "Culture and Biodiversity: Paths without Frontiers". The Program lasted for 9 days with the participation of 45 persons, 38 trainees aged 18-25, and their trainers.



PELLA



VERGINA



OLYMPUS



STAGIRA

The Garden served as an "ecotouristic circle center" that included activities at the Doirani Lake, the Beles Mountain, the Strimonas River and the Kerkini Wetland. The main subject axes of those activities were: Culture, Water and Biodiversity. The evaluation of the Program by both the participants and the organizers, concluded that the potential for further ecotouristic development in the area is good, and highlighted the issues that require further study.

DOIRANI LAKE

Conditions

- Trans boundary lake
- Many stakeholders
- Old way of fishing
- Richest lake with fish in whole Europe
- Gradual emptying

Activities

- Transboundary water workshop
- EU Water framework directive conversation
- Field visit
- Water quality tests
- Role play

THESSALONIKI

Conditions

- Laboratory of Conservation and Evaluation of Native and Floricultural species
- Center of Research and Education
- Plant nursery

Activities

- Lecture on pharmaceutical plants & herbs
- Field visit
- Everlasting flowers

BALKAN BOTANIC GARDEN OF KROUSSIA

Conditions

- Garden of the senses
- Natural oak forest
- Biodiversity path
- Adventure path
- Educational garden
- Aromatic-medicinal / Water loving / Sub-alpine species

Activities

- Experiential games
- Engraving workshop
- Eco-paths
- Round table discussion
- Presentation of material collected on cultural and biodiversity issues

KERKINI LAKE

Conditions

- Ramsar convention on wetlands
- Natura 2000
- Rich bird fauna
- Many stakeholders

Activities

- Integrated Water Resources Management workshop
- Field visit
- Rowing
- Water quality tests
- Cultural evening

SERRES

Conditions

- Beles Mountain
- Strimonas River
- Traditional architecture, bridges, handicrafts
- Museums

Activities

- Eco-path
- Culture-path
- Cultural diversity workshop

