

European Interdisciplinary Silk Road Tourism Centre - Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

The "European Interdisciplinary Silk Road Tourism Centre" has been established on 29 August 2017 at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), by unanimous decision of the Senate of the University.

AIM

The overall aim of the "European Interdisciplinary Silk Road Tourism Centre" is to promote international synergies and regional cooperation perspectives, encourage interdisciplinary research on how to enhance prospects for tourism development initiatives and cross-border collaboration, as well as cultural exchanges among countries on the Silk Road, based upon scientific documentation and analysis of the Silk Road cultural heritage.

The Centre aims at:

- Providing systematic study and databases interpretation, sharing and distributing information about identifying, documenting, mapping and promoting the tangible and intangible cultural heritage and tourism potential of the Silk Road;
- The publishing of Silk Road scientific studies and academic research findings;
- The creation of a network of Universities along the Silk Road countries, to develop curricula on sustainable tourism initiatives based on the Silk Road cultural footprint and support the development of further educational and cultural links among EU Universities and Universities on the Asian Silk Road countries.

WITH THE SUPPORT OF

The establishment of the "European Interdisciplinary Silk Road Tourism Centre" has been supported by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Ministry of Tourism of Greece, and is in line with AUTH holistic internationalization strategy. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki is the largest University in Greece, covering a wide array of academic disciplines from medicine to fine arts, and has a long tradition of implementing large scale research projects. As such, AUTH is extremely well qualified to undertake the scientific responsibility of the "European Interdisciplinary Silk Road Tourism Centre" and to apply an interdisciplinary and in-depth approach into tourism research on the Silk Road. Furthermore, Thessaloniki and the broader Central Macedonia region, historically at the crossroads of civilizations and trade exchanges, have a strategic location for the revival of the Silk Road and the development of regional economic cooperation.

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki has been actively involved in the Western Silk Road Tourism Development Initiative, being one of the Universities selected by UNWTO to participate in the UNWTO – EU research on the "Western Silk Road Tourism Development Initiative".

ACTIVITY

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, in collaboration with the Region of Central Macedonia and Thessaloniki Tourism Organization, coorganized a workshop on the "Silk Road and Tourism Development Perspectives" on 24 April 2017. The keynote speech "New Opportunities for Sustainable Tourism Development along the Silk Road" was addressed by Mrs Alla Peressolova, Head of Silk Road Programme, UNWTO. Mr Nikolaos Gkolfinopoulos, Tourism Intelligence Officer, Silk Road Programme, gave a presentation on "The Western Silk Road Tourism Development and its potential" and Dr. Stella Kostopoulou, Associate Professor, School of Economics, AUTH gave a presentation on the "Western Silk Road and tourism development in the Region of Central Macedonia". A round-table discussion was then organized, where AUTH Professors from the Schools of Forestry and Natural Environment, Architecture, Archeology, Theology, Spatial Planning and Development, gave an interdisciplinary approach into tourism development on the Silk Road. Aristotle University has also actively participated in the 1st and 2nd International Western Silk Road Workshops, held in Alexandroupolis, Greece, 26-27 April 2017 and in Sofia, Bulgaria, 27-28 June 2017. The "European Interdisciplinary Silk Road Tourism Centre" - AUTH joined the Western Silk Road Work Group as well as the Western Silk Road Tourism Academic Network, established by the UNWTO Silk Road Programme.