

## LEA ARTIBAI REGION HELD THE 3TH FIELD VISIT FOR THE SYSTOUR INTERREG EUROPE PROJECT

Between 29 February and 1 March, tourism policy makers from France, Italy, Hungary, Finland and Poland visited Lea-Artibai and the counties of Uribe and Urdaibai as part of the European SYSTOUR INTERREG EUROPE project, whose main objective is to transfer tourist flows to rural areas without valuing, and emphasising the particularities of the regions involved in the project, seeking a balance in the flows of each area and connecting the spaces through sustainable mobility, digital connectivity and the real experiences that a county or region can offer.

The Lea-Artibai region, aware of the importance of controlling the peaks of tourist saturation, and continuing with its sustainable tourism strategy, shares this objective and is actively participating in the project, which is why on 29 February and 1 March, Leartibai Fundazioa was the host entity for the second visit of the semester.

For two days it was possible to learn about and experience first-hand the good practices that had been previously identified for the project in accordance with the objectives set out above.

Thus, the day of the 29<sup>th</sup> of February began with a welcome from our President Joseba Goienola, who mentioned the challenges we face, and also the milestones of our tourist positioning and differentiation. Afterwards, the good practices identified for the project were presented:

1. Lea Artibai Fest
2. Lea Trail
3. Bizkaia Kosta Bus
4. Gobernance
5. Talent retention in Lea Artibai
6. Lekeitio's Maritime Heritage, that was the good practice selected by Hericoast Interreg Europe.
7. Lekitto Bedarrak, Lagunkoia and auzolana projects
8. Murals in Ondarroa

After the presentation, the participants were able to see in situ some of the visits and experiences offered as part of the events, as well as the most important resources of the region. To do this, we had the help of several county agents, both public and private.

On 1<sup>st</sup> of March, the visit went to the coastal regions of Bizkaia. First of all we went to Urdaibai, where, after visiting the Urdaibai Bird Center, we were able to learn about the CETs project in the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve from Nerea Del Moral and Eider Ormaetxea.

Later, Jagoba Martinez from the ADR Jata-Ondo presented the Flysch Bizkaia project in Barrika-Uribe, which is being developed in collaboration with the Getxo Town Council.

The good practices visited have been interesting for the project's partner regions. The most outstanding aspects have been the authenticity of the experiences and the offer, the diversification of the agents in relation to tourism, the efforts we are making to diversify the flows throughout the region through our network of trails and, above all, the positioning that is being worked on taking into account our identity and

our heritage. As an example of this, everyone highlighted the welcoming words of the Mayoress of Ondarroa, Urtza Alkorta, when she said that "Ondarru is a small fishing village, where the sea and fishing are strong and very important signs of identity in terms of tourism. Because the sea has made us what we are and because that is what we want to show....".

