Start of the E-Parks project to improve accessibility to the Natural Parks between Greece and Italy

On November 15th and 16th it was held at Foggia’ University (via Gramsci, 89/91 - Sala Consiglio) the Kick off Meeting of the E-Parks project coordinated by the University of Foggia - Department of Economics, funded under the Greece-Italy Territorial Cooperation 2014/2020.

The event officially marked the start of work for the project activities that will allow the improvement of accessibility and usability of the Gargano National Park and the Kyllini Park in Greece through the creation of access routes for the disabled, the introduction of technological innovations and decision-making systems.

The University of Foggia - Department of Economics leads the project partnership consisting of the Gargano National Park - Italy, the Gargano Reclamation Consortium - Italy, the Chamber of Commerce of Arta - Greece, the Technological Educational Institute of Western Greece. The ASL of Foggia and Confindustria Foggia are associated partners of the project.

The objective of the E-Parks project is to develop a comprehensive mark (label) for public and private subjects operating on the territory of protected natural areas, which allows them to combine sustainability (protection of the natural environment), economy (rational use of scarce resources) and sociability (safeguarding of people with special needs). All this in order to promote responsible tourism development of the cross-border areas affected by the intervention, with a view to increasing their attractiveness.

Among other things, a voluntary certification system will be implemented, testing the combined use of different and adequate environmental management and decision support tools, allowing them to be shared among the cross-border areas concerned.

The project will also carry out pilot actions in some specific areas of the Gargano National Park and in the Kyllini natural area.

The tools and pilot cases will be presented to the European Commission and to the United Nations in New York during the World Day for Disability. All the documents will merge into an actionable handbook that can be used to improve the accessibility of other protected natural areas.

The event was attended by Piervito Bianchi, Giulio Cappelletti, Michele Milone and Giuseppe Nicoletti (University of Foggia), the director of the Gargano Park Carmela Strizzi, the director of the Gargano Reclamation Land Authority engineer Marco Muciaccia, Giovanni Russo (Gargano Reclamation Land Authority), representatives of the Chamber of Commerce of Arta Mr. Ioannis Angelis and Christina Nikolakopoulou, as well as the vice-rector of the Technological Educational Institute of Western Greece prof. Spiros Sirmakessis. Finally, dr. Gianfranco Gadaleta (coordinator of the JS Program), dr. Giuseppe Gargano (project officer of E-Parks) and ms Carmela Sfregola (Interreg communication specialist) took part in the Kick off meeting.