**Launch of rurAllure**:

New Horizon2020 cultural heritage projectofficially kicks off

**The European project “rurAllure: Promotion of rural museums and heritage sites in the vicinity of European pilgrimage routes” has been officially launched on 11-13 January 2021 during the** **kick-off meeting**.

This innovative Horizon2020 project fosters cultural cooperation and sustainable tourism in the proximity of the European historic pilgrimage routes - the Saint James’ Ways, pilgrimage routes to Rome, the route of Saint Olav in Scandinavia and the Way of Mary. RurAllure leverages the state-of-the-art in information technologies to promote rural museums and heritage sites. It enhances symbiosis between rural environment and routes to enrich tourists’ experience by the vast cultural heritage that most often goes unnoticed.

The 3-day meeting, which was conducted digitally, brought together project partners and associates under the leadership of the University of Vigo. Ms. Hinano Spreafico, a representative of the Research Executive Agency of the European Commission, welcomed all the participants and stressed the importance of cooperation and innovation in the sector of heritage and tourism.

16 cutting-edge European organisations and research institutions will work on common strategies and develop the project’s pilots, each of them focusing on a particular type of heritage along a pilgrimage route. The research on the Saint James’ Ways will be focused on literary heritage and will be managed by the Uxío Novoneyra Foundation, Municipality of Vila do Conde, Autonomous University of Madrid (ES), and University of A Coruña.

The pilot lead by the University of Bologna will research thermal heritage along the pilgrimage routes to Rome – the Via Francigena, the Via Romea Strata and the Via Romea Germanica together with the University of Padova and Venice, European Association of the Via Francigena ways and the Foundation Homo Viator - San Teobaldo.

The Saint Olav route in Norway will be researched from an ethnographic perspective by the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

The natural heritage of the Way of Mary, a route running through Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania, will be studied by the Government Informatics Development Agency, Mary Road Public Benefit Association, Slovak Technical University, and Comenius University in Bratislava.

During the 3-day meeting the overview of the project was presented, as well as the pilots’ descriptions and partners’ contributions. The participants also had a chance to get to know each other and present the activities of their organisations.

Along with the University of Vigo, the other rurAllure partners are: GVAM Guías Interactivas S.L. (ES), Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (ES), Fundación Uxío Novoneyra (ES), Universidade da Coruña (ES), Câmara Municipal de Vila do Conde (PT), Kormányzati Informatikai Fejlesztési Ügynökség (HU), Mária Út Közhasznú Egyesület (HU), Comenius University in Bratislava (SK), Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava (SK), Università degli Studi di Padova (IT), Fondazione Homo Viator San Teobaldo (IT), Associazione Europea Vie Francigene (IT), Università degli Studi di Bologna (IT), Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NO), IUAV University of Venice (Italy).

More information about the project can be found at [www.rurallure.eu](http://www.rurallure.eu), which is also where future project outcomes and findings will be published. For further inquiries: [contact@rurallure.eu](mailto:contact@rurallure.eu)