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Press information, Styrian tourist boards will strongly support ROMEA STRATA pilgrims' project

Following a kick-off-meeting of the four Upper Styrian tourist destinations Hochsteiermark, Erzberg-Leoben, Murtal and Murau, important representatives of the tourist boards met again on March 16th at Austria's largest travel fair 'Ferien-Messe Wien' to discuss further details how to revitalize the important Styrian pilgrimage route "Mariazeller Gründerweg" in cooperation with the European Association ROMEA STRATA (AE ROMEA STRATA).

The Mariazeller Gründerweg from St. Lambrecht to Mariazell has been travelled by pilgrims for centuries. The importance of this pilgrimage way can be traced back to the founding of Mariazell more than 850 years ago: The legend tells that Mariazell was founded by monk Magnus from St. Lambrecht Abbey. He is said to have been sent in 1157 by his abbot Otker into the wilderness of today's Mariazell region, where he built a wooden chapel for his lime wooden statue of the Virgin Mary, thereby laying the foundation for the name and location of Mariazell. The pilgrimage route following monk Magnus' footsteps is still popular with pilgrims today. However, it has fallen out of public interest and is no longer actively advertised; former advertising materials are sold out. Now, with the ROMEA STRATA, there is a new impulse to revive the "Mariazeller Gründerweg".

New opportunity to revive the long traditional pilgrimage path "Mariazeller Gründerweg"

Today the "Mariazeller Gründerweg" is part of the European network of pilgrimage ways forming the ROMEA STRATA from Tallinn to Rome. Therefore, the importance of this way will increase significantly in the future and attract a high level of international and national attention. Especially in the Jubilee year 2025, a great international demand for pilgrimage offers on all sections of the ROMEA STRATA is expected. The motto is: Pilgrimage towards Rome. It means that in addition to the original route from St. Lambrecht northwards to Mariazell, there is also a need to find the route southwards from Mariazell to Rome. This requires qualification measures on the "Mariazeller Gründerweg" regarding continuous signage, path maintenance and targeted marketing measures.

Participation in the activities of the Jubilee 2025

Preparations have also been made for participation in the Vatican's big Jubilee in 2025. Pope Francis has announced the Jubilee 2025 with the official motto "Pilgrims of Hope" and invites international associations and institutions to participate with their own activities. The Styrian "Erlebnisregionen" (regions of experiences) along the way to Rome are actively involved in the planning of events and activities in collaboration with the AE ROMEA STRATA, including the pilgrimage sites of Mariazell, Seckau Abbey and St. Lambrecht Abbey, which have already been identified as milestones for special spiritual and cultural experiences.

Pilgrimage is sustainable and environmentally friendly

The ongoing project will also make a strong contribution to improving sustainability. Mass tourism has a negative impact on the environment (high consumption of resources, waste, air and water pollution, etc.). Pilgrimages, on the other hand, are considered soft tourism with hardly any negative impact on the environment. The initiative of the Styrian tourism destinations is therefore also intended to raise awareness of sustainable travel offers among tour operators, accommodation providers and leisure

companies. Particularly sustainable companies and regions should act as role models across Europe. In addition, the involved regions should benefit from increased added value.

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