

# Challenges and opportunities for sustainable tourism development



## The European Commission's actions to enhance sustainable tourism

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## Introduction

- Tourism is a cross-cutting sector hence more than an economic activity
- It contributes to a wide range of key EU objectives:
  - Sustainable Development
  - Economic Growth
  - Job Creation
  - Social and Regional Cohesion
  - Protection of natural and cultural heritage
  - EU citizenship
  - Peaceful relationships etc.

## Facts & figures on EU Tourism

- > the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest economic activity in the EU (after Distribution and Construction)
- > involving a big diversity of services and professions,
- > dominated by SMEs
- > relatively resilient sector despite uncertain economic outlook

### > socio-economic importance of tourism:

- 5% of the EU GDP
- 5.2% of the total labour force (9.7 million jobs)

### but with other related sectors:

- 10% of the EU GDP
- 12% of the total labour force (24 million jobs)

# Europe N° 1 tourist destination in the world taking into account the number of international tourist arrivals

Thanks to great:

- cultural and historical heritage
- natural assets
- diversity of sceneries
- quality services
- good connectivity

Among the top 10 countries visited:  
France, Spain, Italy, Germany and UK.



# The EU competences in the field of tourism

- European Union – 28 Member States
- Member States and their regions have full competence in implementing their respective tourism policies.
- **EU competence** (after the Lisbon Treaty art. 195) is to :  
**Complement, support and coordinate** the action of the Member States in the tourism sector

How? By:

- **Encouraging the creation of a favorable environment** for the development of undertakings
- **Promoting cooperation** between the Member States, particularly by the exchange of good practice
- **No harmonization** of the laws and regulations of the Member States



# The main objectives of the EU tourism policy

**To facilitate the responsible competitiveness of the EU tourism sector, the sustainable growth and job creation of the tourism activity in the EU and globally** in order to provide to the EU and third countries tourists high quality, best value for money, safe, innovative, sustainable and accessible tourism products/experience.

Actions in line with the **Europe 2020 strategy** and its flagships initiatives:

- **Smart growth:** Innovation Union
- **Sustainable growth:** Resource Efficient Europe
- **Inclusive growth:** Agenda for New Skills and Jobs - European Platform against Poverty

## The EU tourism actions focused around following main axes:

- 1) Stimulating competitiveness** in the European Tourism sector (consolidating knowledge, ICT uptake, professional skills, improve EU tourism supply)
- 2) Promoting the development of a sustainable, responsible, and high quality tourism**
- 3) Consolidating image and profile of Europe -** improving/diversifying supply and enhancing quality of services. (Communication Campaign "Europe –whenever you're ready")
- 4) Maximising the potential of EU policies and financial instruments** for developing tourism



# Sustainability - a key aspect for the European tourism competitiveness.

**To be sustainable, tourism must be economically viable, meet the needs of society, conserve the environment and cultural heritage it depends upon,** and in this way, continue to deliver benefits without detriment to current and future generations.

The European Commission:

- incorporates sustainability in tourism related policies/actions
- encourages Member States / tourism stakeholders to develop more sustainable tourism (by exchange of good practice, assisting, providing a supportive policy framework)



# Key challenges for the sustainability of EU tourism

1. Reducing the seasonality of demand
2. Addressing the impact of tourism transport
3. Improving the quality of tourism jobs
4. Maintaining and enhancing community prosperity and quality of life, in the face of change
5. Minimizing resource use and production of waste
6. Conserving & giving value to natural/cultural heritage
7. Making holidays available to all
8. Tourism as a tool in global sustainable development

# European Destinations of Excellence "EDEN"

## Objectives:

- Enhancing visibility of the emerging, non-traditional European tourist destinations of excellence
- Rewarding sustainable forms of tourism
- promoting networking between awarded destinations to persuade other destinations to adopt sustainable tourism development modes

This European quest for excellence in tourism is developed around an annual theme (leitmotif), chosen by the Commission together with the relevant national tourism bodies.

**2007 – rural tourism**

**2008 – local intangible heritage**

**2009 – protected areas**

**2010 – aquatic tourism**

**2011 – tourism and regeneration of physical sites**

**2013 – accessible tourism**

<http://ec.europa.eu/eden>



## European Destinations of Excellence “EDEN”

- > 100 destinations awarded in Europe so far + 19 new destinations as from 11th November 2013
- > **EDEN Network** - a platform for the exchange of good practices at European level between awarded destinations but also with the aim to persuade other destinations to adopt sustainable tourism development practice.





## European Destinations of Excellence "EDEN"

The key feature of the selected destinations is **their commitment to social, cultural and environmental sustainability.**

The recipients of the award **are emerging, little known European destinations**

The process thus aims to help **de-congest over-visited tourist destinations.**

The initiative helps to **spread the sustainable practices across the Union** and to turn these little known but excellent places into all-year-round venues.

**Main benefits for destinations** and their local economies: visibility, tourism flows, networking



# "Sustainable transnational thematic tourism products"

EU supports development and promotion of **sustainable transnational thematic products**

(e.g. transnational cycle or hiking routes like: "EuroVelo" Network of long distance cycle routes, Greenways, itineraries based on nature, rural, gastronomic, pilgrims tourism, as well as: cultural or industrial heritage tourism routes passing by several European countries (**European Cultural Routes, ...**)

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/index_en.htm)



## Other EU actions aiming at enhancing sustainable tourism development:

- **European Charter for a sustainable and responsible tourism**  
– set of principles and guidelines for their implementation to encourage sustainable, responsible practices
- **European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS)** for Sustainable Management of Tourist Destinations

Launched in February 2013, together with a practical step by step Toolkit (guidelines)

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/indicators/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/indicators/index_en.htm)



# European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) for sustainable destinations

- ETIS comprises 27 core and 40 optional indicators grouped into the sections:
  - Destinations management,
  - Economic value,
  - Social and Cultural Impact,
  - Environmental Impact
- Designed as locally owned and led process for monitoring, managing and enhancing the sustainability
- Tracking destination's performance and influence adequate policies – enable on-going development and continuous improvement.
- Simple to use/flexible/suitable for any destination
- Testing phase on-going with participation of 100 destinations.



# EU international cooperation for tourism

**Cooperation between the EU and the main emerging countries** (China, Brazil, Russia), **Mediterranean countries** (Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia) by establishing dialog in view of exchange of best practices/reinforce cooperation in sustainable tourism.

**Missions for growth involving political and business meetings** in the fields of Enterprise & Industry policy to enhance cooperation in areas of mutual interest

Joint declarations/lettres of intent signed with e.g. the South America countries (Chile, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay) as well as with, among others, Mexico, Israel... to strengthen the tourists flows, in particular in low/medium seasons.



## EU - the world's largest donor of official development assistance

The primary objective of EU development policy: **the reduction of poverty** in the context of **sustainable development** and the achievement of the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**.

Project established in 2012 by the European Commission (DG EuropeAid): "Enhancing capacities for sustainable development in developing countries" under which the "**Sustainable Tourism for Development**" **Guidebook** has been prepared together with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

It reflects on the role of tourism as an engine for development, trade in services, job creation and poverty reduction.

<http://icr.unwto.org/en/content/guidebook-sustainable-tourism-development>



## Cooperation – working together

To ensure favourable conditions for tourism to **grow in a competitive, sustainable and responsible** manner, the European Commission is working closely with a large range of tourism stakeholders:

EU Institutions, Member states, regions, destinations, industry representatives, associations, federations, networks...

international organisations (UNWTO, UNEP, OECD...)etc.

## Contact details

European Commission, Tourism  
website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/index_en.htm)

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*Thank you for  
your attention*