



European Economic and Social Committee

EUROPEAN CONSUMER DAY 2005

"Sustainable Consumption"

***Sustainable tourism: Towards a
European Tourism Model***

Javier Bustamante

Municipal Authorities of Ibiza (Spain)

Brussels 15 March 2005

A few observations on tourism:

- This is a sizeable and stable industry, with prospects for long-term growth
- It is a driving force for local development, creates jobs and wealth and can contribute to the Lisbon Strategy
- It is an industry of strategic importance for post-enlargement Europe as a whole, accounting for some 5% of European GDP
- It currently faces threats on various fronts and needs a new development model
- It requires comprehensive policies ensuring that the sector's global targets and challenges are met, while adhering to the conditions and values of sustainability
- This sector represents an enormous opportunity for all EU countries

Main trends in European tourism development (I)

- **International tourism in Europe will continue to grow at a slow rate (3%);** the percentage of intra-regional travellers (85%) will remain steady and will increase more markedly in the northern and eastern regions, with growth falling in the more heavily saturated central and western areas.
- **European tourists will be increasingly mature and demanding;** holidays will be more flexible, frequent and brief; individual and niche demand will increase and the sector catering for mature and elderly travellers will continue to grow.
- **The traditional "sun, sea and sand" destinations will have to reinvent themselves if they are to avoid falling into decline;** the demand for products related to active leisure, culture and nature will increase, as will the demand for more personalised, more enriching and higher-quality products.

Main trends in European tourism development (II)

- **Pressure from both residents and tourists for a more sustainable form of tourism development will continue to grow and, in the longer-established destinations, measures aimed at containing the growth of tourism and at revitalising faded local attractions will be stepped up.**
- **In order to address global environmental problems, the unbridled growth of transport and, consequently, of the most contaminating forms of tourist mobility will have to be contained.**
- **The strength of the new technologies and the trend towards competition and concentration in business will revolutionise the sector:** the forms in which information is provided and in which marketing is undertaken, the customer-business-destination relationship, and the very structure and working procedures of the various businesses involved in tourism.

Towards Sustainable Tourism in the 21st Century:

Three basic objectives arising from Johannesburg 2002

- 1) To attempt to change the model to one of sustainability, in a participatory and consensual way**
- 2) To show that economic results are dependent on the sound management of all resources**
- 3) To show that environment-friendly development creates high-quality jobs**

Tourism in the European Constitution

- *Article I-17 of the European Constitution includes tourism in its areas of supporting, coordinating or complementary action:*
- *Section 4 of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, entitled Tourism (Article III-281) sets out its position on tourism:*

“1. The Union shall complement the action of the Member States in the tourism sector, in particular by promoting the competitiveness of Union undertakings in that sector.

To that end, Union action shall be aimed at:

- (a) encouraging the creation of a favourable environment for the development of undertakings in this sector;*
- b) promoting cooperation between the Member States, particularly by the exchange of good practice.*

2. European laws or framework laws shall establish specific measures to complement actions within the Member States to achieve the objectives referred to in this Article, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States.”

Tourism in the European Constitution

- *The Treaty recognises the economic nature of tourism and its potential to generate wealth through businesses.*
- *There is no suggestion of a move towards European harmonisation in this area. The intention is simply to acknowledge that Europe has a role to play in complementing and coordinating national policies.*
- *Furthermore, the desire to exclude any regulatory activity that could be used to harmonise these policies is made quite clear.*
- *This, in the opinion of the EESC, does not exclude but indeed facilitates the reaching of compromises in identifying the values that define a European tourism model.*
- *The Treaty could possibly have set out more interventionist models for tourism, but a reading and analysis of the proposed text shows that it takes a generally positive line, in harmony with the rest of the constitutional text.*
- *The Treaty enables us to continue trying to achieve the main objectives of improving European tourism.*

10 Aspects of Sustainable Tourism

- Responsible tourists and consumers
- The creation of high-quality employment
- Competitive and socially responsible businesses
- Positive and balanced social cohesion
- Stability through reduced seasonality
- Culture and heritage as a part of tourism
- Availability to all, whether disabled or non-disabled
- Environmentally sustainable
- Fosters solidarity and peace
- The overall responsibility of the different players in the sector

Sustainable Tourism and Consumers

Tourism is the interpersonal provision of services:

- Creating and disseminating sustainable models for the rights and responsibilities of tourists, service providers and institutions
- Promoting information, awareness-raising and management policies on sustainable patterns of tourism, in countries of origin, during the journey and at tourist destinations
- Reinforcing the development of tourism products based on the sustainable use of resources
- Exercise of social and environmental responsibility by tourists, taking into account and promoting local values
- Focus by service providers on quality, promoting eco-labels and vocational training
- Promoting tourism as a fundamental, useful and necessary activity for everyone and as a means of bringing people closer together
- Respect for the principles of the Code of Ethical Tourism approved by the World Tourism Organisation

Consumer Aspects of Tourism

- Personal safety is vital
- Responsibility of service providers
- Tourism is a service chain, no link in this chain can be neglected: information, travel agencies, transport, accommodation, restaurants, leisure, location, hygiene
- Directive 90/314/EEC on package travel covers some of these aspects
- Tourism organised on the Internet represents a new challenge to tourist protection

Towards a European Tourism Model

- A wide range of public and private tourism initiatives are being developed which, rather than contributing to a legal regulation, could shape a new European tourism model.
- This model would be based on the following values, criteria and forms of action:
 - Economic, social and environmental sustainability
 - Creating high-quality employment
 - Security with respect for freedom
 - Valued local culture and heritage
 - Public-private cooperation
 - Providing tourist information and raising awareness
 - Responsibility of providers of tourism services
 - Responsibility of the "new" tourist
 - Unity of peoples
 - Promoting peace

Tourism is a leisure activity through which all European citizens can live together in harmony and share their beliefs