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Editorial

The present issue of the Journal of Tourism and Services contains scientific papers, short essay, industry news and press releases.

The contributions to this issue are authored by researchers and scholars from Austria, Great Britain, Latvia, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia.

Marietta Fragkogianni's paper deals with Island Destination Marketing in an Era of Recession. She examines the consumers' decision-making process for destination selection during a period of economic turmoil on the island of Zante, Greece. The results confirm that a financial crisis does not entail cancellation of travel; instead, it generates various combinations of costly facilities such as accommodation, food, and transport. Additionally, local decision makers alter their decisions according to the crisis circumstances and observe the selection factors used by visitors. It also confirms the important role of central government in destination decision-making and formulation of marketing activities.

Candan Olcer and Erdogan H. Ekiz examined the community perception of sustainable tourism development for a newly developing destination of Baksı village of Bayburt in Turkey. The purpose of the research was to acquire a proper understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of residents regarding tourism development. The survey results seem to indicate that the local community, whose traditional fate has been emigration for many years, associates several opportunities with tourism. For the sustainable tourism, it is proposed that tourism planning and decision-making should involve the local people. The authors draw a roadmap for future studies in addition to making a number of recommendations.

The purpose of the Jekaterina Voznuka's study was to determine a positioned identity of the most popularized destinations in Latvia, investigating the communication content and brand attributes of Latvia destinations. The paper discusses the concepts of positioning in destination marketing and analyses how Latvian towns apply the logo, slogan, and other communication tools for its positioning. The results of the study show that there is no determined strategy for creating place recognition by using tools of communications in many Latvian towns. As a result, it is observed that even if some separate aspects of positioning are found they are not consolidated to a whole concept for tourism development and visitors attraction. A position of many Latvian towns could not be able to create a unique identity of the city, to differentiate it from other destinations and to promote its recognition.

The short essay of Klaus Pfatschbacher explores the relation between Jules Verne works and tourism development. The author points out that many readers tend not to realize how much was Verne interested in the service sector. Verne tried to develop a blueprint for the development of

tourism in a country and at the same time he entertained the reader who understands his economic suggestions quite quickly. The author recommends analyzing Verne's works again as they provide essential information on the undertow of tourism nowadays.

I would also like to welcome the new member of the Editorial Board and express the belief that our collaboration will be successful and will lead to further improvement of the Journal.

Last but not least I would like to wish to all members of the Editorial Board, present and future authors, supporters, colleagues, and readers a Merry Christmas and a Successful New Year!

Alžbeta Királová
Chair of the Editorial Board

Island Destination Marketing in an Era of Recession

Marietta Fragkogianni

University of Suffolk

Abstract

It is common ground that marketing plays a crucial role for the survival and development of any destination. The study examines the consumers' decision making process for destination selection during a period of economic turmoil. The research was held in holidaymakers (N=400) on the island of Zante, Greece. The results confirm that a financial crisis does not entail cancellation of travel; instead it generates various combinations of costly facilities such as accommodation, food, and transport. Additionally, local decision makers alter their decisions according to the crisis circumstances and observe the selection factors used by visitors. It also confirms the important role of central government in destination decision-making and formulation of marketing activities.

Keywords: Tourist destinations, financial crisis, destination marketing, tourist decisions

JEL Classification: M31, M37, Z33

1. Introduction

The promotion of destinations plays a crucial role in tourist decisions (Pratt et al., 2010). However, external promotional pathways are not the most predominant element in the decision-making process; rather, the content of information is. This, combined with internal beliefs, provides the basis for the formulation of the decision, justifying in parallel the need for the destination promotion to be strong and effective (Stienmetz et al., 2015). Especially during periods of recession, what interests policymakers, tourists and stakeholders is disposable income (Kennedy, 1998). For Greece, tourism is one of the most important constituents supporting the national economy, particularly in periods of recession, and the country consists of various island destinations (*The Economist*, 2015). This study sheds light on how economic turmoil, tourist marketing and

tourist decision processes are interrelated in Greece through examining the case of the island of Zakynthos (Zante). It is expected that this study will shed light on many promotional paths and how destinations of this kind could use them to deal effectively with economic turmoil.

More analytically, this study indicates how promotion must be undertaken in islands during recession to stimulate tourist demand. It further examines: (i) the intensity with which recession influences island destination marketing, (ii) the characteristics of relevant selection processes, (iii) the main constituents of island destination marketing and (iv) the factors affecting tourist decisions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Recession

Many scientific pieces of work have discussed the direct and indirect repercussions of recession on tourism (Sheldon and Dwyer, 2010; UNWTO, 2011), most likely because tourism depends on income elasticity (Lanza et al., 2003; Smeral, 2012). However, there have been shown to be many more factors affecting tourist expenditure. At this point, there are two important questions to be addressed: Do tourists reduce their expenditure? If so, how? (Campos-Soria et al., 2015). In relation to this issue Nicolau and Masiero (2013) state that there is no homogeneity in people's reactions: some tourists maintain their spending attitude, while others are influenced by demographics, the climate of the country of origin, the destination's attractiveness, education, etc. (Eugenio-Martin and Campos-Soria, 2010). It is surprising how the difference between the climate in the country of origin and destination influences people's choices (Eugenio-Martin and Campos-Soria, 2010). In addition, there is a remarkable difference between the two genders: women are more keen on traveling than men (Mergoupis and Steuer, 2003).

The existing literature on tourists' reactions during recession is not rich as high incomes existed until recently (Bronner and Hoog, 2014; Smeral, 2010). Since 2009, Smeral has started investigating the issue, paying particular attention to non-homogeneous consumer reactions. This study could further contribute to such research. The Keynesian Consumption function presents a parallel rise between consumer expenditure and high income (Pettinger, 2011); however, Prideaux (1999) found in Asia that the change was not significant. Moreover, in contrast to inbound tourism (Page et al., 2012), outbound tourism seems to be more vulnerable to crises (Ara a and Le n, 2008). There is also support for the proposition that travel close to the country of origin constitutes a common means of cutting back (Bronner and Hoog, 2012; Papatheodorou et al., 2010). It can reasonably be presumed that the rationale approximates that for the case of climate: tourists examine the relationship between the country of

origin and destination based on a cost-benefit analysis and if the destination is found not to be worth the expenditure, staying at home or not travelling too far is taken to be the right choice.

Various scientists have examined serious crises in relation to their respective effects on tourism, for example the United States (US) crisis in 1980 (Frechtling, 1982), the Asian crisis in mid-1997 (Okumus et al., 2005) and the 2001 crisis in Turkey with its effects on Cyprus (Page et al., 2012; Ritchie et al., 2010; Song and Lin, 2010). However, surprisingly, cutbacks usually occur in the form of “fewer days”, “lower cost accommodation”, “cheaper services” and generally a decrease in expenditure rather than cancelling travel altogether (Bronner and Hoog, 2014; European Travel Commission, 2009).

Consequently, when threatened by crisis, destinations apply various mixes of marketing strategies, mainly promoting lower prices (Ritchie et al., 2010; Smeral, 2010). However, integrated market research is needed to aid providers of tourism products in accurately forecasting tourists' wants (Gokovali et al., 2007) in order to choose the best strategy to apply, which is essential in achieving sustainable competitiveness (Hystad and Keller, 2008) through value-adding strategies (Sheldon and Dwyer, 2010). Ang et al. (2000) argue that during recession, the need for businesses to revise their tactics and apply cost-effective policies is particularly imperative. In contrast, Rosberg (1979) states that as practice has demonstrated, for those businesses which maintain the same levels of promotional expenditure during recession, the profits generated shortly after the recovery period are huge, while those which reduce expenses of this kind are not as fortunate.

In addition to businesses, there is a considerable need for abundant information on the part of central governments for the application of suitable policies (Okumus and Karamustafa, 2005). Furthermore, relevant, accurate and timely information is needed for their cooperation with the private sector to establish the basis for growth in tourism (O'Brien, 2012). Crucial external policies could be influenced significantly when a country acts either individually or as a member of a wider union in relation to issues concerning currency exchange rates, attracting tourism and investment attraction and attaining a high level of competitiveness (Ang, 2001).

At the micro and macroeconomic levels, local decision makers need appropriate information to predict and therefore successfully manage a local area's tourism demand (Smeral, 2009). Campos-Soria et al. (2015) specify this need in decisions related to employment, the salaries of tourism staff, duration of stay and the price of accommodation.

2.2 Central government policies

Using a cost-benefit analysis approach, Liu and Wall (2006) argue that tourism is a crucial tool for central governments for the development of

a country, provided that it reinforces all three dimensions of sustainability (environmental, economic and socio-cultural). Andereck et al. (2005) emphasize the “theory of social exchange”, stating that the potential outcomes and benefits lead to the decision of governments and stakeholders to become involved in tourism issues. In addition to the benefits for destinations, governments should consider all stakeholder groups’ interests (Ap, 1992; McGehee and Andereck, 2004). In support of this view, Byrd et al. (2009) point out that representatives of governments invest in local tourism to a greater extent than locals and entrepreneurs themselves.

More specifically, governments should pay greater attention to the “way” in which tourism is used rather than just the “use” of tourism itself (Donaldson and Preston, 1995). Thus, as tourism is of a multidisciplinary nature, various initiatives should be taken (e.g. marketing, promotional activities, facilities, events, infrastructure, etc.) to attract tourists’ choice of destinations (Donaldson and Preston, 1995). Donaldson and Preston agree with Liu and Wall (2006) that every government should guarantee sustainability, given their capability to impose necessary regulations and laws.

For these reasons, governments should demonstrate care and responsibility in defining and defending all stakeholders’ interests, otherwise the outcome of their policies will not be to attract tourists (Clarkson, 1995; De Oliveira, 2003; Puczko and Ratz, 2000; Yuksel et al., 1999). However, this can be achieved if the importance of the stakeholders’ interests is considered in advance (Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Davis and Morais, 2004; Gursoy et al., 2002; Markwick, 2000; Ryan, 2002; Vincent and Thompson, 2002). More precisely, the more thoroughly the groups’ interests are understood, the easier it is to avoid conflict and realize plans (Reid et al., 2004; Sautter and Leisen, 1999).

Everyday practice includes an abundance of examples of governments enacting laws to secure various dimensions of sustainability, attracting tourists who are lower in number but higher in quality and income (Beeton and Benfield, 2002). However, Mbaiwa (2005) argues that this policy can prove cost ineffective. Governments should safeguard quality through their policies to exert a positive influence on tourist decisions. Moreover, they need to focus on the provision of services as these constitute an indispensable element of the tourist experience that cannot easily be measured, but can generate profits to be reinvested in the conservation of sights and facilities (Mmopelwa et al., 2007).

By creating a favourable business environment with sound public-private relationships, tourism can be developed as a high-yield economic tool (Hankinson, 2005), which, when linked to new branding techniques, meets the expectations and desired standards of specific tourist segments and attains successfully positioning in the market (Fetscherin, 2010).

2.3 Destination selection factors

The ways in which stakeholders structure their marketing activities must be defined by the criteria used by tourists to form their decisions (Bigné et al., 2001; Chen and Tsai, 2007), usually related to personal ideas and beliefs (Beerli and Martin, 2004; Rozier-Rich and Santos, 2011). In this process, the creation and promotion of a place's image is crucial (O'Leary and Deegan, 2005; Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000). Destination marketing organization (DMOs) and managers should identify the desired characteristics and successfully communicate them to tourists (Grosspietsch, 2006). In addition to the points made by Beerli and Martin (2004) and Rozier-Rich and Santos (2011), Kim et al. (2011) highlight the repetition of choice. On the other hand, Markwich (2001) stresses the importance of elements of "locality" that could lead to successful promotional strategies. In support of Markwich's (2001) position, Pike (2012) stresses the importance of clarity and flexibility in concrete messages; however, he counterbalances these characteristics with their high cost and multiplexity, as well as the existence of competing destinations.

A destination's image strongly influences tourists' impressions of quality and the degree of their satisfaction, in turn affecting their intention to revisit the place (Sirgy and Su, 2000; Sönmez and Sirakaya, 2002). Destination image is created by many factors, both informal (e.g. family and friends) and formal ones (e.g. advertisements in newspapers and on television), promotional campaigns, tourist businesses, DMOs, etc. (Molina and Esteban, 2006). To these influences on tourist decision and image creation, Guttentag (2010) and Pan and Fesenmaier (2006) more specifically add the Internet. Pike (2012) proposes that this helps people obtain sufficient information to distinguish easily between destinations and shape a "mental picture" of a destination in their minds. In addition, the Internet motivates tourist choice (Ryan and Glendon, 1998) by reducing the anxiety that the decision-making process entails (Buckley, 2012; Fodness, 1994) and continuously interacting with personal values, culture and beliefs (Frías et al., 2011; Reynolds and Gutman, 1988; Rokeach, 1968–1969).

The sound presence of local authorities is frequently noted in the form of companies establishing public–private partnerships (Bornhorst et al., 2010; Palmer, 1996). For this reason, Pike and Page (2014) consider that DMOs and local authorities are capable of connecting purely tourist activities (e.g. destination marketing) with broader activities (e.g. general location marketing). In addition, the presence of locals is proved to be a robust factor through the "transfer" of their identity to the place where they live through their contribution to its management and planning (Gu and Ryan, 2008; O'Neill, 2006; Wood, 2006; Woosnam et al., 2009). In addition, Andereck et al. (2005) (cf. 2.2) examine the locals' role from the perspective of "social exchange theory" (Jurowski and Gursay, 2004;

Lawton, 2005; Wang and Pfister, 2008). According to this theory, locals bear in mind any potential advantages and disadvantages when interacting with visitors and the general tenor of such encounters define the destination's competitive advantage and the tourists' impressions of the destination (Garrod et al., 2002).

The destination selection factors influence the tourist attributes offered and consequently the way in which these are offered influences the final decisions of tourists (Rewtrakunphaiboon and Oppewal, 2008). The Australian government's encouragement of tourism providers offering innovative types of tourist experience constitutes a sound example of influence on the purchasing behaviour of visitors (Tourism Australia, 2007). Agendas and suitable yield management techniques are useful tools in governments' hands (Leask, 2010). While it has been established that various aspects, such as expenditure, length of stay and travel time are crucial in influencing the decision-making process (Hyde, 2008; Seddighi and Theocharous, 2002), little is yet known about the relationship between travel options and governmental policies (Oppewal et al., 2015). However, due to their significance, it is necessary to include local decision makers in the formation of governmental policies (Garrod and Fyall, 2000).

2.4 Local decision makers

At a local level, DMOs aim to encourage collaboration between stakeholders to ensure the successful management of tourism problems (Dwyer and Kim, 2003). According to D'Angella and Go (2009), while DMOs bear the responsibility of planning and coordinating destination marketing, they also tend to be linked to bureaucracy and complex governmental regulations and laws.

During recession, the role of local stakeholders is prominent for tourist destinations and is strongly related to: (i) communication encouragement, (ii) media influence and (iii) contribution to the formation of a destination's image (Hystad and Keller, 2008). This role is of a dynamic and continuous nature and the commitment of the stakeholders to achieving the strategic goals that have been set, following a relevant plan, reinforces their performance and improves the quality of the outcomes of their collaboration (Medeiros de Araujo and Bramwell, 1999; Williams et al., 1998). Thus, the clarification of their duties must be regarded as essential (Hystad and Keller, 2008). As is also stressed by Pike (2012), the importance of the DMOs' role is considerable for the competitiveness of marketing activities, the satisfaction of tourists' desires and therefore the creation of differential advantage, something which is also linked to the actions of local decision makers. He notes that the budget available for marketing seems to follow the size of the DMOs in that small DMOs do not usually have the capacity to apply an extensive range of positioning schemes.

Three schools of thought, represented by Riedel (1972), Bornhorst et al. (2010) and Jamal and Getz (1995), provide clear views on the way in which people perceive participation in local processes and the interaction between local decision makers within the context of marketing activities. According to Riedel (1972), most people approve participation under positive circumstances only. Bornhorst et al. (2010) and Jamal and Getz (1995) partially disagree with Riedel, arguing that what motivates people's participation is the acquisition of benefits independent of the nature of the circumstances. In full contrast to Riedel (1972), Zhao and Richie (2008) state that most people aim to participate in both positive and negative circumstances except when the peripheral environment does not encourage this. For this reason, they recognize legislation as an extremely useful tool to facilitate people's actions. Within the context of Agenda 21, Harrison et al. (2003), in line with Zhao and Richie (2008), also pay attention to the sustainable nature of local participation. They contend that locals can undertake multidisciplinary activities, e.g. discussions at the level of negotiations, running analysis and monitoring the local environment and public dialogue, in which integrated decentralization could prove beneficial (Royo et al., 2011).

It is important for locals to have strong belief and enhance their ability to develop their self-efficacy in their efforts to create a successful and sustainable tourist destination (Andriotis and Vaughan, 2003; Choi and Sirakaya, 2006; Hanley et al., 2009). More precisely, the attainment of sustainable relationships with prospective visitors is one of the most difficult tasks for local communities (Morgan and Hunt, 1994) as against the financial dimension, which is the easiest to achieve in contrast to the other two dimensions (sociocultural and environmental) of an area's sustainable development (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). In this regard, a good start could be made by using the mistakes and negative experiences of the past as guidance (Mason and Cheyne, 2000).

However, the responsibility of local decision makers is even greater. Fairness and equality in the distribution of the benefits generated by their actions are within their remit (Byrd et al., 2009; Easterling, 2004; Ryan, 2002).

2.5 Marketing activities

Destination selection factors could exert a great influence on marketing activities, which in turn could affect tourist decisions. Frias et al. (2008) and San Martin and Rodriguez del Bosque (2008) also support this, stating the means through which this process could be achieved, i.e. the emotions and reasoning that are used intensively throughout the decision-making process, especially during the creation of images in tourists' mind (Chen and Tsai, 2007).

In relation to this, Qu et al. (2011) argue that promotional activities must not overpromise or consist of misleading impressions as in the end

what rests in tourists' minds is the real image and experience as actually "lived". Pike (2012) adds that non-overpromising, non-misleading marketing activity that is well organized, based on the ideal balance between "emotional" and "rational" elements, is not sufficient on its own. Rather, it should be better when compared to that of competitors, meaning that it should be unique, difficult to emulate and certainly attractive. In this effort, "innovation" is the key to the success of marketing activities and must be demonstrated throughout all the elements in the marketing mix (Doolin et al., 2002; Mariadoss et al., 2011; Naidoo, 2010; Sok and O'Cass, 2011; Tang et al., 2012; Weerawardena, 2003).

In releasing a competitive message, the inclusion of a combination of central and peripheral cues in the marketing activities and the degree of tourists' involvement in the information search define their final decision (Tang et al., 2012). These contribute to the formation of the "selling proposition", which aims to be "unique" and is supposed to provide the most suitable solution – in comparison to other destinations – to the eventual "problem" of "which is the best destination to choose" and "why" (Pike, 2012).

Here, the presence of the Internet is important in the information search (Buhalis and Law, 2008). However, aligned with Pike (2012), Auger (2005) strongly argues that a lot more is needed than simply an online presence; this presence must be carefully constructed and given competitive characteristics (Berthon et al., 1998). The reason is that it influences all stages of the decision process: "a. information receiving, b. cognitive processing and c. formation of attitude – conation" (Tang et al., 2012, p. 39; see also Kaplanidou and Vogt, 2006). It is therefore proposed that tourism business managers should adopt integrated and holistic approaches and policies as the majority of people naturally have multiple means of information retrieval and promotional strategies to hand, such as magazines and blogs, in which an enterprise has to have a robust presence (Choi et al., 2007), progressively creating the demand for sophisticated tourism marketing (Ottenbacher, 2007).

2.6 Tourist decisions

For a long time, family, with a particular focus on the wife–husband couple (Thornton et al., 1997) and the children (Borgeman and Van der Poel, 2006; Palan and Wilkes, 1997; Wang et al., 2004), has been regarded as one of the most influential factors in the decision-making process (Kang and Hsu, 2005; Kirchler, 1993, 1995; Spiro, 1983). However, the genders demonstrate differentiated behaviour (Kozak, 2010): unlike males, who seem to be constrained in terms of information seeking, women and children have acquired a more powerful role (Flurry, 2007; Rose et al., 2002; Shoham and Dalakas, 2003).

Gitelson and Crompton (1984) state that the relationship between

tourist expenditure and travel time and duration affects the tourist decision, although not so that travel is necessarily cancelled, especially if a destination demonstrates characteristics which attract human interest (Nicolau and Más, 2006). Accommodation (Kozak, 2001) and services (Zeithaml et al., 1993) are among the most delicate and important elements of tourist selection, with the role of friends and relatives also being influential (Inman and Zeelenberg, 2002; Tsiros and Mittal, 2000).

In this influential process, the interference of national and individual cultural elements can be observed on the part of both tourists and destinations (Arora and Fosfuri, 2000; Kacen and Lee, 2002), accompanied by linguistic factors (Basala and Klenosky, 2001; Henderson, 2003) and characteristics of cultural proximity (e.g. everyday life style, intimacy, etc.). In addition, similarly to the provision of information, these influential factors derive their deeper roots in the process from their capacity to release the anxiety of tourists regarding their choice (Buckley, 2012; Fodness, 1994; Ng et al., 2007).

3. Methodology

3.1 Secondary research

With an emphasis on tourism, marketing and the financial crisis, the study examined secondary data in the form of existing literature on the topic. According to Sekaran (2003), through the use of secondary data the researcher acquires information that constitutes the outcomes of previous studies to shed light on the area of interest and develop another study that is realized at a later stage. In this way, general information is used that provides the environment for the new research to take place.

In this research, the vast majority of the data were derived from online published journals, most of them of high quality, allocated 3* and 4* in the Association of Business Schools' (ABS) Academic Journal Quality Guide (2010), except those in hard copy, distinguished for their contribution to academic knowledge and business operations. The journals that were used as sources belonged to multidisciplinary thematic groups, e.g. tourism business, marketing, information technology, psychology and finance. Books and grey literature were also used (e.g. reports of national and international bodies, such as the European Travel Commission), as well as online newspapers and press releases usually generated by worldwide organizations, e.g. UNWTO (Burns and Burns, 2008).

Secondary data are invaluable in providing two main advantages, time efficiency and cost effectiveness, which are crucial in research demanding the provision of accurate details and needing to meet certain deadlines (Malhotra, 2009). However, because it is not possible to tailor secondary data to the needs of a concrete study (Saunders et al., 2009), primary quantitative research was also used.

3.2 Research design

Malhotra (2009) states that a research design should be either exploratory or conclusive and that a conclusive design can either be descriptive or causal. Finally, descriptive research could potentially be either cross-sectional or longitudinal (Malhotra, 2009). More precisely, exploratory research provides relatively generalized ideas and information to the researcher that can help draw a brief outline for the problem under investigation (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005). For this reason, in most cases, conclusive research follows exploratory research (Sekaran, 2003). For the needs of this research, exploratory research took place in the form of analysis of secondary data, which formed a basic, brief background to the issue (Malhotra, 2009). Following the exploratory phase, a conclusive design helps define the kind of information that is essential for the study and the most appropriate method to acquire this information (Wilson, 2012). Within the context of this research, a quantitative approach was chosen to examine hypotheses and relationships.

According to Malhotra (2009), descriptive research is suitable for providing a brief description of a phenomenon, as well as identifying various characteristics and behavioural types of people and market segments. To better serve the aims of this study, a quantitative survey was also used. As the survey drew on a market segment that was questioned only once, upon arrival at Zakynthos airport, a cross-sectional design was applied (Saunders et al., 2009). A longitudinal design has the advantage of providing a large amount of accurate data (Wilson, 2012). However, unlike the cross-sectional design, it demands repeated examinations of the sample (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005), which in this case would not have been feasible; indeed, it would have been costly and time consuming. Nor was causal research, one of the two types of conclusive research design, applied (Malhotra, 2009) as the study was not undertaken on the basis of a cause-and-effect relationship.

3.2.1 Sampling

According to Malhotra (2009), the sampling or sample design is related to issues such as the type and requirements of a sample, its size and characteristics, its configuration, the efficiency of respondents, etc. Those who were interviewed in the context of the research and thus provided information during the survey constitute the “elements”. They comprise a “representative sample” as they represent a small part of the total population, in contrast to the total population, which would constitute a “census” (Saunders et al., 2009).

The design of the sample (Burns and Burns, 2008) was as follows:

- The “target population” consisted of tourists arriving for a holiday. The sample comprised 400 people. The geographical area (“extent”) of

the research was Zakynthos and the “time frame” was the period from mid-July to early August.

- Only adults were included in the “sampling frame”.
- A “probability” sampling technique was used, including elements (respondents) with a known or equal chance of being questioned if the selection is random. More precisely, the probability technique is in line with “systematic sampling”, in which after a random start every “ith” flight is selected (Malhotra, 2009). For the needs of this study, the questionnaires were distributed to inbound tourists on every fifth flight.
- Concerning the sample size, the population questioned was based on Akis et al.’s (1996) study, calculated with a confidence of 95%, statistical error of 5% and possibility of uncertain conservative response 50/50 as follows:

$$N = \frac{(t - table)^2(hypothesis)}{S^{-1}} \Rightarrow N = \frac{(1.96)^2(0.5)(0.5)}{(0.5)^2} \Rightarrow N = 384.16,$$

rounded to 400 (Fragkogianni, 2015, p. 7).

- Finally, to facilitate the process, the author qualified the elements (tourists) through preparatory questions and provided sufficient guidance before and during the completion of the questionnaires.

3.2.2 Data analysis process

For the analysis of the data the descriptive statistics – means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis – were calculated for all the questions using SPSS 18.0. Cross-tabulation was used to analyse the effect of recession on a long-term basis.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive statistics

Burns and Burns (2008) state that there are two types of statistics: descriptive and inferential. Descriptive statistics summarize groups of data to facilitate their description and transform them into values of a conceivable character. Moreover, Burns and Burns (2008) separate descriptive statistics into measures of a central tendency and measures of deviation. In relation to the measures of central tendency, indicating whether the distribution of the majority of scores lies around a specific value, the average, frequently reported as the “mean”, constitutes the most common measure of central tendency, “suitable for numerical values and attitudinal statements” (Palihawadana, 2013, p. 19).

Because of the constrained time limit, demographic analysis was not applied as it was considered unnecessary in view of the purposes of the

research. The descriptive analysis of the 400 questionnaires distributed, measuring the various constructs (all responses given on a five-point Likert scale), generated the values shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics

	Statement: Recession	Mean	Std. Dev.
R1	The current recession has led me to take fewer holidays	3.81	.982
R2	The current recession has led me to reduce my length of stay on holiday	3.39	1.045
R3	The current recession has led me to select cheaper transport	2.66	.933
R4	The current recession has led me to select cheaper accommodation	3.88	.900
R5	The current recession has led me to select a destination closer to home	3.33	.992
	Statement: Central Government Policies	Mean	Std. Dev.
CGP1	It is important for central government tourism policies to focus on destination planning	3.92	.666
CGP2	It is important for central government tourism policies to focus on destination marketing	3.96	.662
CGP3	It is important for central government tourism policies to focus on strengthening destination branding	4.06	.623
CGP4	It is important for central government tourism policies to focus on destination positioning	3.81	.691
CGP5	It is important for central government tourism policies to focus on product development	3.74	.704
CGP6	It is important for central government tourism policies to focus on visitor management	3.92	.617
CGP7	It is important for central government tourism policies to focus on the provision of sufficient information to visitors	4.01	.618
	Statement: Destination Selection Factors	Mean	Std. Dev.
LDM1	Destination stakeholders should focus on providing good accommodation	4.30	.599
LDM2	Destination stakeholders should focus on providing good shopping opportunities	4.08	.470
LDM3	Destination stakeholders should focus on providing a good natural environment	4.21	.462

LDM4	Destination stakeholders should focus on creating a well- known image for the destination	4.19	.557
LDM5	Destination stakeholders should develop the friendliness of locals living in the destination	4.13	.452
	Statement: Local Decision Makers	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
LDM1	Destination stakeholders should focus on providing good accommodation	4.30	.599
LDM2	Destination stakeholders should focus on providing good shopping opportunities	4.08	.470
LDM3	Destination stakeholders should focus on providing a good natural environment	4.21	.462
LDM4	Destination stakeholders should focus on creating a well- known image for the destination	4.19	.557
LDM5	Destination stakeholders should develop the friendliness of locals living in the destination	4.13	.452
	Statement: Marketing Activities	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
MA1	During a crisis, advertising should be maintained	4.32	.504
MA2	During a crisis, destinations should promote new products	4.36	.505
MA3	During a crisis, destinations should implement alternative pricing	4.34	.524
MA4	During a crisis, marketing should focus on new customers	4.26	.526
MA5	During a crisis, destinations should seek out innovative marketing ideas	4.37	.527
	Statement: Tourist Decisions	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
TD1	I made my final decision by compromising my needs due to recession	3.36	.771
TD2	I made my final decision by obtaining the seller's opinion	3.90	.841
TD3	I made my final decision after bargaining with the seller	3.52	.950
TD4	I made my final decision by obtaining my friends'/relatives' opinions	4.12	.736
TD5	I made my final decision by obtaining my family's opinion	4.27	.614

	Statement: Factors Important for Destination Selection	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
F1	Expenditure	4.52	.510
F2	Safety & security	4.30	.579
F3	Accommodation infrastructure	4.20	.568
F4	Sanitation	4.46	.528
F5	Sightseeing	3.95	.580
F6	Convenience	4.17	.608
F7	Activities I can participate in	3.98	.572

In relation to the respondents' attitudes towards **recession**, the fourth statement (R4) concerning the selection of cheaper accommodation gained the highest proportion of agreement (agree: 189/400 [47.3%]; strongly agree: 100/400 [25%]), while the third statement (R3), focusing on the selection of cheaper transport, gained the greatest overall disagreement of 50.8% (disagree: 186; strongly disagree: 17) (see Table 1).

In relation to the respondents' attitudes towards **central government policies**, the third statement (CGP3), concerning the importance of central government tourism policies to focus on the strengthening of destination branding, and the seventh (CGP7) statement, concerning the importance of central government tourism policies focusing on the provision of sufficient information to visitors, showed the highest proportion of agreement (343/400 [85.8%]; 336/400 [84.1%] respectively). Contrary to CGP3 and CGP7, the fifth statement (CGP5), related to the importance of central government tourism policies focusing on product development, as well as the fourth statement (CGP4), referring to the importance of central government tourism policies focusing on destination positioning, had the lowest proportions of agreement ([67.1%] 268/400; [73.8%] 295/400 respectively), revealing a general tendency towards agreement (see Table 1).

In relation to the respondents' attitudes towards **destination selection factors**, the second (DSF2) statement concerning the importance of overall tourism expenditure in selecting a destination obtained the highest proportion of agreement (agree: 175/400 [43.8%]; strongly agree: 220/400 [55%]), while the third statement (DSF3), related to the importance of cultural attractiveness as a destination selection factor, gained the lowest proportion of overall agreement 68% (agree: 216; strongly agree: 56), which demonstrates a general tendency for agreement (see Table 1).

In relation to the responses related to attitudes towards **local decision makers**, the first statement (LDM1), referring to the obligation for destination stakeholders to focus on the provision of good accommodation, acquired the highest proportion of agreement (agree: 222/400 [55.5%]; strongly agree: 148/400 [37%]), while the second statement (LDM2), which refers to the obligation for destination stakeholders to focus on the provision of good shopping opportunities,

had the lowest proportion of overall agreement at 92% (agree: 308/400; strongly agree: 60/400), which demonstrates a general tendency towards agreement (see Table 1).

Concerning the statements related to responses towards **marketing activities**, that referring to whether the destinations should seek innovative marketing ideas during a crisis (MA5) attained the highest proportion of agreement (agree: 235/400 [58.8%]; strongly agree: 156/400 [39%]), while the fourth statement (MA4), which refers to whether marketing should focus on new customers during a crisis, had the lowest proportion of overall agreement at 96% (agree: 266/400; strongly agree: 118/400), indicating a general tendency towards agreement (see Table 1).

Dealing with the perspectives of the respondents concerning **tourist decisions**, the fifth statement (TD5), referring to whether they made their final decision by obtaining their family's opinion, obtained the highest proportion of agreement (agree: 233/400 [58.3%]; strongly agree: 139/400 [34.8%]), while the first statement (TD1), referring to whether they made their final decision by compromising their needs due to recession, acquired the lowest proportion of overall agreement at 41% (agree: 140/400; strongly agree: 24/400), indicating a general tendency for agreement (see Table 1).

Concerning respondents' views on factors deemed important for **destination selection** (see Table 1), expenditure attained the highest proportion of agreement (agree: 186/400 [46.5%]; strongly agree: 212/400 [53%]), while sightseeing showed the lowest proportion of overall agreement at 82.8% (agree: 279/400; strongly agree: 52/400), indicating a general tendency towards agreement.

4.1.1 Long-term impact of the recession

The long-term influence of recession was considered by the respondents to be relatively moderate as the mean was 3.58 (Std. Dev. = .826). The majority of the respondents (N=248) considered that the recession would continue to affect their decisions, while 105 respondents were neutral with regard to the impact of the recession. Table 2 illustrates the justification produced by the respondents concerning this respective influence: 386 respondents answered this and 21 respondents gave more than one answer. In total, 407 responses were collected. The most frequent response was related to salary stagnation (36.6%), followed by the continuation of the crisis in Europe (26.3%) and prospect of high unemployment (15.5%).

Table 2

Long-term effects of recession

	Reasons	Long-term Influence				
		Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Significantly	Total
1	Salary stagnation	0	0	39	94	16 149
2	Continuation of European crisis	0	0	31	68	8 107
3	High unemployment	0	0	20	37	6 63
4	Europe will overcome the current crisis	5	22	2	0	0 29
5	Instability of Euro monetary unit	0	0	5	14	1 20
6	The European economy will improve	1	10	2	0	0 13
7	Continuation of political instability	0	0	5	4	0 9
8	The economy of the respondent's country will improve	0	7	1	0	0 8
9	Other	0	3	3	3	0 9
	Total	5	39	102	209	31 407

Table 3

Correlation in terms of recession's influence in consumers' decision-making

Item	CC	Item	CC	Item	CC	Item	CC
CGP1	-.011	DSF1	.119*	LDM3	-.088	MA5	.043
CGP2	.089*	DSF2	.125*	LDM4	-.088	TD1	.155**
CGP3	-.005	DSF3	-.116*	LDM5	-.108*	TD2	-.119*
CGP4	-.010	DSF4	.216**	MA1	.001	TD3	.058*
CGP5	.009	DSF5	.135**	MA2	-.018	TD4	.046
CGP6	-.006	LDM1	-.051*	MA3	-.063	TD5	-.041
CGP7	-.096	LDM2	-.044	MA4	.000		

Notes: CC = correlation coefficient. *Correlation is significant at the .05 level. ** Correlation is significant at the .01 level.

5. Discussion

5.1 Correlation analysis concerning the recession

The correlation analysis (Table 2) revealed that the highest impact of recession concerns the statements examining consumers' destination selection factors. For all relevant statements there is statistical significance, while the highest correlation occurs in the statement concerning the importance of social considerations (e.g. social unrest) for potential travellers in selecting a destination (DSF4). A series of correlations were also found for the statements concerning tourist decisions. As the results indicate, the highest correlation concerns the formulation of tourist decisions and the compromising of consumers' needs due to recession (TD1). Surprisingly, the only cluster of statements to exhibit no statistical significance in the correlation analysis seems to be that dealing with marketing activities (MA). It appears that even though the descriptive statistics (Table 1) clearly highlight the importance of marketing during recession, the economic crisis itself affects the influence of marketing formulation, but not to any great extent concerning marketing penetration in the market.

5.2 Managerial implications

Sheldon and Dwyer, (2010) argue that integrated market research is necessary for tourism stakeholders to arrive at relevant, accurate and timely information that permits them to adapt effectively to constantly changing circumstances. Thus, it can be assumed that successful management is necessary for tourism businesses to recruit sufficiently qualified employees with the ability to access information and data. By providing sufficient information concerning the current situation, they can help managers predict the future status of the tourism industry. Moreover, given that during periods of recession tourist expenditure is a severe concern for the vast majority of people, suitable yield management is crucial in the business sector to reduce operating costs and thus also develop the capacity to provide accommodation and other facilities at a lower cost. Careful study must be undertaken at this stage to ensure the results of investigation are relevant over the long term, leading to a destination's sustainable development and providing a powerful means of fighting recession (Gokovali et al., 2007). In relation to tourism businesses, operational and promotional activities should also demonstrate continuity as consistency (Rosberg 1979) strengthens business while also being very attractive to tourists.

According to Ang (2001), a country's national and international behaviour greatly affects its attractiveness to prospective tourists. For this reason, every country that aims to achieve touristic success should take care of its international presence. In addition, it should be careful to

maintain favourable external relationships with other countries to attract as many tourists as possible.

According to the research findings, local stakeholders hold a pivotal role in the construction of a destination's image, as shown in the existing literature as well as by the findings of the primary research, which revealed that positive interactions with locals are highly appreciated by the respondents. It should be noted that innovation must characterize every marketing plan, while a successful promotional strategy can be drawn up only through constructive cooperation between all the stakeholder groups that have interests in the tourism sector.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Limitations of the research

This study aims to shed light on a topic about which very little is known (Bronner and Hoog, 2014; Smeral, 2010). As with any study, this has its limitations. First, as the survey was run within a constrained timescale (mid-July to the beginning of August), a survey of longer duration should be undertaken. It should also be noted that the central harbour is an additional important entry point for visitors to the island, especially from Italy. However, issues with circulation and harbour operations made full access to the travellers technically impossible. Thus, the airport was chosen as being more representative of international tourists.

6.2 Future research directions

This study presents fundamental aspects of tourism and destination marketing using the small island of Zakynthos as a case study. However, to provide more integrated and representative research, the survey should be repeated in a tactical manner. In this way, any change in circumstances and people's behaviour could be more effectively observed. In this case, the behaviour of important local stakeholders and the opinions of the residents, as well as their reactions to everyday life, should also be investigated. This process could be applied in the case of every other destination with a similar profile, provided that the research is adapted to their particular characteristics.

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Community Perception of Sustainable Tourism Development for a Newly Developing Destination: The Case of Baksı

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Abstract

The attitudes and perceptions of local communities are of special interest when investigating a tourist destination. To this end, a survey was conducted in the Baksı village of Bayburt in Turkey with the purpose of acquiring a proper understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of local residents regarding tourism development.

Baksı, formerly known as Bayraktar, has a population of 303. Although Baksı looks like a typical village situated in the mountainous region of northeastern Anatolia, it has an important differentiating characteristic in the sense that it harbors the first museum-hotel in Turkey. This museum was awarded the Council of Europe Museum Prize in 2014. The prize, in the form of a bronze statue by Joan Miro, is displayed in the museum.

The survey results seem to indicate that the local community, whose traditional fate has been emigration for many years, associates several opportunities with tourism. For the sustainable tourism, it is proposed that tourism planning and decision-making should involve the local people.

In our conclusion, we draw a road map for future studies in addition to making a number of recommendations.

Key words: Sustainable tourism, community perception, new destination, Baksı village

Jel Classification: Z32

1. Introduction

Recently, with the decline in the local production and increase in emigration in rural areas in Turkey, tourism development is considered as a powerful force to change the economy and to keep the local residents in their home towns. Tourism development provides several economic, social and environmental changes on local people's life [11].

UNEP and UNWTO [20] define sustainable tourism as “Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”.

Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.

Thus, sustainable tourism should:

- 1) Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
- 2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.
- 3) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contribute to poverty alleviation.

Local community presents one of the key elements for the sustainability of a place, and successful tourism development depends on the balanced and harmonious relationship between tourists, the local people and places they visit and the organizations and businesses that provide tourism services [3] [21]. Host communities play important roles in tourism development, and their involvement is critical to the success of the destination. [1] [5] [10] [16].

This study aims to examine the host communities' perceptions in a developing area of Turkey and to show the importance of community attachment in order to develop tourism in that area. Despite the number of studies that have examined residents' perceptions, only a few examined the residents' perceptions in newly developing tourism destinations. Hence, conducting this assessment in a region that is new to tourism development would progress the literature in this domain especially since residents' perceptions differ as destinations move through stages of development [6] [14].

There are three main objectives of this study:

- (1) To identify the demographic profiles and residents' level of involvement in tourism

- (2) To explore the residents' attitude and perception towards tourism development
- (3) To suggest the future management strategy for the area.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Study Area

The study area is chosen in line with the core objectives of the research. Bayburt is a city situated in Northeastern Turkey. Baksı village and the only museum in Bayburt -Baksı Museum- are located in Bayburt, Turkey. Bayburt is on the historic Silk Road which links the Black Sea region to Eastern Anatolia.

Bayburt is a city with a tourism potential which has been neglected for a while. The city contains facilities related to tourism listed as follows: four facilities for accommodation, 16 for food and beverage, five for arts and crafts and seven for transportation. The city's castle, Ulu Mosque, Bayburt Tower, Saruhan Tower, Aydıntepe underground town, Mausoleum of Dede Korkut (the most famous among the epic stories of the Oghuz Turks), Varzahan Armenian Church are some of the places that tourists are interested in visiting.

"Baksı" literally means "healer, helper, protector" in Central Asia. It is a village with 315 residents. The village and the museum are situated along the Black Sea coast, 45 km from Bayburt on a hilltop overlooking the Çoruh Valley.

Next to the Baksı village there is Baksı museum which was founded in July 2010, after 20 years of preparation by the contemporary Turkish artist Hüsamettin Koçan, who decided to build a museum in his hometown in the Black Sea region of Bayburt's Bayraktar village. Baksı is the former name of the Bayraktar Village [22].

The museum was constructed over an area of 30,000 square meters and has an exhibition space of 1,500 square meters. Among the main goals of the museum are to revive local traditions and seek ways for villagers to find resources to earn a living without having to leave their communities. The museum is also intended to create new areas that bring together traditional and cultural lifestyles [22].

The Museum has received the Council of Europe's Best Museum Award for 2014. It contains contemporary art and ethnographic exhibitions. It seeks to stimulate the economic life of Bayburt, a region which has lost as much population to emigration as any in Turkey. The purpose of the museum is to create an original center of cultural interaction involving traditional and contemporary arts for the benefit of artists and researchers, to revive a cultural environment shattered by emigration and to contribute toward the sustainability of the cultural memory.

In the architectural design phase of the museum, associations were

sought with the eastern roof tradition of local architecture. Rising in harmony with the surrounding mountain skyline, the Baksı Museum grew out of a building-sculpture approach which blends with the natural milieu [22].

The museum area has three parts: Museum, guest house and the cultural center. Baksı Museum can be considered as a differentiated cultural product in Turkey and a good example of creative tourism implementation.

In 2014, with the initiative of Baksı Museum and Kudaka (North-Eastern Anatolian Development Agency), ten houses were transformed into guesthouses, the village center and the village environment have been renovated, and the look of the land has been improved in order to make the village ready for the visitors.

2.2. Literature Review

In this section, the significance of community perception and involvement in sustainable development is discussed.

Sustainable development has been extensively discussed in the tourism industry because such development can meet the needs of tourists, provide opportunities to enhance economic growth, protect physical locations, and improve the quality of life of residents while enhancing opportunities for the future through the coexistence of tourism development and environmental quality [7] [13] [15].

Studies based on social exchange theory have found that the perceived benefits significantly and positively affect support for tourism development [10] [11] [12], whereas the perceived costs have a significant negative effect on the support for tourism development [10] [12].

The factors which influence residents' perceptions and attitudes as well as the nature and the extent of the impact are likely to be different in each community [8].

Community residents might hold different attitudes towards tourism development. It is hard to believe that tourism can develop in a sustainable way where a large proportion of residents hold negative attitudes or behave in an unfriendly manner when interacting with tourists.

Tosun [19] specifically addresses the characteristics of destination resident participation, identifying three forms of host community participation in tourism development. First, spontaneous participation is when the host community engagement in tourism development is voluntary and based on the community's own ideas and motivations. Second, induced participation is where the host community merely suggests ideas for tourism development with tourism authorities ultimately responsible for final decisions. Third, coercive participation refers to a situation where tourism development is ostensibly meeting the needs of destination residents, but, in reality, is for the benefit of external stakeholders such as statutory authorities, tourists or tour operators.

Tosun [18] contends that the ideal type of host community participation in tourism is voluntary participation. Stimulating spontaneous participation requires appropriate policy development at the local, national and international levels.

3. Methodology

Empirical research was carried out at the Baksı village. The target sample was the residents who live in the Baksı village. According to TÜİK (Turkey Statistical Institute), the village has 303 inhabitants. The ideal sampling for this research would have been a comprehensive database of all residents in the study area. However, accessibility to these databases was limited due to the fact that most of the residents were going to the city of Bayburt to work and some declined to be interviewed.

Items used in the questionnaire are derived from the various related literature [2] [4] [9]. The questionnaire was translated into the Turkish language. The author, together with a local enumerator went to the houses in Baksı village to interview the residents. The researcher asked the questions and transcribed the answers as well since the residents of the village were not used to filling a questionnaire. Seventy six interviews were completed and fifty nine were retained and used for subsequent data analysis. The study was carried out over a week period in September 2014. In addition to the questionnaire survey, semi-structured interviews were held with the local community. The study was carried out over a week period in September 2014.

The profiles of the host residents were evaluated using SPSS 17.0 for Windows. In analysing the interviews content analysis –coded and then grouped based on their similarities- helped to identify ideas of respondents.

4. Findings

Descriptive analysis and calculation of means are used to profile the respondents in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics and their attitudes toward tourism.

The majority of respondents are male (62.7%) and young (64.4% are less than 37 years old). With regard to educational background, 32.2% have a high school diploma, while 30.5% have attained secondary school. In terms of employment 27,1% stated that they are self-employed. The enquiry about income did get ambiguous results. 15 % stated that some members of the family had to move to other cities and because they couldn't find any job in Bayburt (neither in the village nor in the city) and 11% had to move due to the lack of education opportunities in Bayburt.

Regarding the residents' attitude towards tourists, 37% see them as

people who help the development of Bayburt and contribute to its exposure to the rest of the country and 15 % see them as money spenders.

Tourism is seen as a major contributor to the local job and financial earning capabilities (14%) while 7% think that the moral values of the young generation will be affected negatively as a result of tourism development in the area. 28% of the respondents believe that the educational and cultural level of the residents will improve through interaction with the tourists.

While most of the women do not communicate or communicate a little bit with the tourists (54.5%) , more than half of the male respondents (51.3%) state that they give directions when asked, visit around with the tourists or accommodate them at home.

Further inquiries during semi-structured interviews showed that the residents are afraid that foreigners will affect their traditions and life styles. They don't even feel comfortable to send the young girls of the village to the Museum's handcraft activities or let them to work in the museum. The residents feel excluded from the management and development activities of the area. They think that people's awareness has increased after the opening of the Baksı Museum. Some of the residents have accepted to open their house for the use of the visitors, and in some houses rooms are renovated with the help of KUDAKA (North East Anatolian Development Agency).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

As the host of tourists and the environment where the tourism industry operates, the community plays an important role in the successful development of the tourism industry [21]. It is very difficult to ensure the sustainability of the tourism industry without the support of community residents.

The demographic profile of this study reflects a male dominated society where the male plays an important role in decision making. As most of the family members have to work or study abroad, they are familiar with the notion of "foreigner", and they treat foreigners very well.

After this study a seminar was organized for the volunteer villagers in order to present them the tourism concept. Such seminars involving local authorities and local residents should be implemented more frequently in order to develop the perception of the tourism concept and the benefits should be well described in order to create a positive attitude towards the tourists. While the economic impacts of tourism should be communicated, the importance of a wider spectrum of tourism impacts (i.e.socio-cultural, environmental) should also be mentioned in order the gain residents' support.

The residents have high hopes and a positive expectation of Baksı's development mostly because of economic dependency. Future

sustainability in tourism development will absolutely require more involvement among local residents in the planning and management of Baksı and Bayburt's tourism. Moderate tourism development tends to be perceived in a positive way but when this development intensifies, opinions might turn into a negative form. The local residents in Baksı are holding a positive attitude with regard to the tourism development and to keep this attitude in the same level, the authorities should organize the tourism movements in a way to eliminate the negative sociological, environmental effects. The authorities in Bayburt should come together with the residents of the village to map out a route for the future.

As Tosun [17] mentions, not all communities at destinations will detect all types of impacts or at least not with the same intensity. The attitudes that residents have towards tourism impacts will also be determined by the characteristics of the residents of Baksı. A tourism planning should involve a sustainable development which will match the residents' expectations and characteristics. The residents of Baksı are living in a very secluded area of Turkey. That's why every step about tourism development in the area should be well explained to the residents. The museum should also be used as a linkage between the tourists and the local residents as it is the only tangible tourism attraction in the village.

This study involved a small sample of the residents of Baksı due to the absence of the young generation who has emigrated to study or to work. In a developing region, such as Baksı where tourism is estimated to be an economy regenerator, tourism development should meet the local community's expectations and generate benefits in terms of economic, sociocultural and environmental factors. Future research should not only focus on the involvement of the local residents in tourism planning but should also address the concerns on how to provide benefits from tourism development.

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Tools of marketing communications and branding in positioning and in promotion the identity of Latvia destinations

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine a positioned identity of the most popularized destinations in Latvia, investigating the communication content and brand attributes of Latvia destinations. The paper discusses the concepts of positioning in destination marketing and analyses how Latvian towns apply logo, slogan and other communication tools for its positioning. After presenting the theoretical background and the methodology, author interprets the results attained and offers recommendations. As it has been shown by the study there is no determined strategy for creating place recognition by using tools of communications in many Latvian towns. As a result it is observed that even if some separate aspects of positioning are found they are not consolidated to a complete concept for tourism development and visitors attraction. A position of many Latvian towns could not be able to create a unique identity of the town, to differentiate it from other destinations and to promote it recognition.

Key words: marketing communications, destination marketing, identity, positioning, tourism development

JEL Classification: M31, L83, O18

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the most important sectors of the world economy. Most European territories and places actively try to increase its market share in the tourism industry. The success of the destination in the tourism market depends on the ability to develop a successful and competitive marketing strategy. Marketing strategy is a reflection of activities and tools the destination management will develop to achieve the objectives on the selected tourism market [4]. Kotler and Gertner [15] defines marketing strategy as a set of principles for adapting marketing concepts to changed circumstances. Thus defined marketing strategy complies with the conditions in tourism destinations. Positioning and marketing communications are the most popular fields in destination marketing.

Places can be positioned by creating a place identity for them so the chosen factors of attraction increase the place image value and attractiveness. Identity creation is a useful tool for starting a systematic marketing and branding of a place.

This study focuses on the relationship between places identity and their positioning. The paper discusses the concepts of positioning in destination marketing and analyses how Latvian towns apply logo, slogan and other communication tools for its positioning.

The purpose of this study is to determine a positioned identity of the most popularized destinations in Latvia, investigating the communication content and brand attributes of Latvia destinations.

In order to be able to achieve the purpose of this study the following research questions have been formulated:

What are positioned Latvia destinations' strengths?

What are the main kinds of Latvia destinations tourism attraction promoted in media?

Is there a clear positioning seen through each message in various media channels and brand attributes?

Does the semantic core of each communication form an integral perception of destination benefits, advantages and show its identity and differences from others destinations of Latvia?

The paper under consideration uses the results of an empirical study conducted in spring and summer of 2016. The research was implemented with employment of Internet sources monitoring and qualitative content analysis of the information about Latvia travel destinations. The relationship between places identity and their positioning was explored through an investigation of visual communications, symbols and published messages about travel opportunities and advantages promoted by diverse media. By using this combination of research methods the author was able to answer the research questions and also give recommendation for the successful positioning and creating identity of the Latvia destination.

2. Literature review

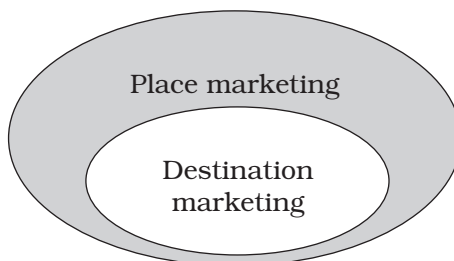
2.1. Destination marketing concept's main points

Based on a large part of the theoretical and professional literature, it can be postulated that the modern scientific and professional position of destination marketing, together with a considerable part of destination branding, has developed from place marketing. Globally, places are being marketed as attractive locations for tourism, trade, talent (education and employment opportunities) and treasury (investment opportunities). Each of these four categories includes product or factor offerings that enhance market potential [10, p.19].

Place marketing includes the concept of destination marketing (Figure 1), which is concerned exclusively with external target groups and their attraction to a place [27, p.65]. In other words, destination marketing targets only visitors – it focuses on tourists.

Figure 1

Place marketing and destination marketing relation



Source: the scheme is developed by the author

Destinations are traditionally defined as territories, geographical areas, such as a country, an island or town [5], with political and legislative framework for tourism marketing and planning. Destinations can be recognized as a perceptual concept, interpreted subjectively by visitors, where a combination of all products, services and experiences are provided locally [3]. Destination is a complicated product and it is frequently used as a main brand in the tourism industry for its customers, namely tourists. Moilanen and Rainisto [18] consider that the spectrum of destination is enormous. At one end are compact destination products such as theme parks and spas. At the other end of the spectrum are groups of countries or whole continents – Asia as tourism destinations. Between these extremes is a great range of types and scales of destinations: large geographical areas (the Alps, The Baltic regions); individual countries, regions, cities, towns, resorts, local tourism destinations and combinations. Despite this great variety of destinations, all destinations are products: the consumption of the complex activities that comprise the tourism experience is the marketable product.

The literature contains a number of scientific studies which cover the field of destination marketing. Destination marketing has many different definitions in literature. For example, according to Gold and Ward [9], destination promotion is defined as the conscious use of publicity and marketing to communicate selective images of specific geographical localities or areas to a target audience. While this definition focuses on the production of a destination image, Kwon and Vogt [16] offer an inverse perspective that focuses on image acceptance. In this view, destination marketing efforts result in cognitive, emotional and behavioral effects.

As it is noted in a number of manuscripts authored by Sautter and Leisen [22]; Stamboulis and Skayannis [23]; Stankovic and Dukic [24]; Wheeler [28], destinations are some of the most difficult entities to manage and market due to many reasons:

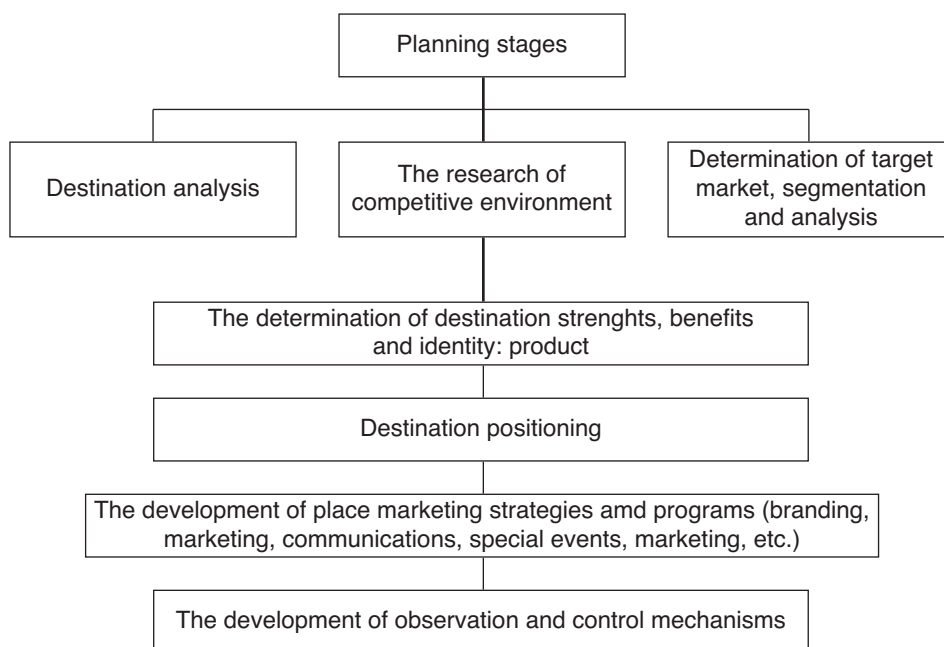
1. The increase of global competition among destinations;
2. The change in the taste of tourists;
3. The complexity of the relationships of local stakeholders involved in the development and production of tourism products;
4. Word of mouth - people generally trust what other people say about their tourist experiences.

2.2. Determination of identity and positioning in the destination marketing

The elaboration and planning of destination marketing strategy aimed at the tourism development, is based upon the numerous in-depth studies in different fields. Relying on the author's previous researches and investigations on the issues of planning the place marketing strategy, the directions of the researches determining the stages of destination marketing planning are showed in the scheme below (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Destination Marketing Conception Development Stages



Source: the scheme is developed by the author

Place identity is an unique characteristic or set of meanings existing in a place and its culture. The concept of place identity can be understood widely, because the unique characteristics may be related to any aspects of the place life – geographic, cultural, social, economic, etc.

In any case, it is argued that, if the right expectations are to be created in the minds of potential visitors, and to avoid unpleasant surprises, „the true identity of place” should be the foundation on which to build the place brand propositions [10, p.17-18].

Ekinci and Hosany [6] suggest that destination personality can be used for building destination brands, understanding visitors’ perceptions of destinations, and creating a unique identity for tourism places by developing strong emotional ties between consumers and brands, thereby resulting in greater trust and loyalty [7]. Place identity is considered as a mechanism to regenerate meaning and memory [19].

Places can be branded by creating a place identity for them so the chosen factors of attraction increase the place’s image value and attractiveness. Place branding is a useful tool for starting a systematic marketing of a place. When a place has chosen its most essential identity factors it can start to develop its substance to correspond with its marketing statements [17, p.27].

Position is a form of market communication that plays a vital role in enhancing the attractiveness of a travel destination. The communications strategy is designed to help to destination communicate effectively. It can help destination increase awareness of the destination, achieve global publicity, strengthen the destination image as a favourite destination, target specific market, ensure understanding of what the destination does, change behaviour and perceptions where necessary, support the brand, increase the visitation numbers in social media channels, website and digital communication, engage effectively with stakeholders, and demonstrate destination’s success [14].

Creating focused proposition is part of the positioning process and perhaps one of the greatest challenges in branding [8].

Baker [1] describes the positioning process aims at identifying the needs of the target customers, the destination strengths (both tangible and intangible) and the competitor strengths. With regard to a destination, positioning can be described as a ability to develop and communicate meaningful differences between the offerings of the particular destination and its tourism [26].

Destination positioning provides the ability to develop and communicate meaningful differences between the offerings of the particular destination and its tourism the process of establishing a distinctive place of that destination in the minds of potential visitors.

Positioning of a tourism destination is the term used to explain how a destination compares to similar destination in regional, national and international terms. The aim of this process is to create a unique image for the potential customers [13]. Furthermore positioning is defined as

one of the steps of destination branding process [2]. According to Pike [20] the effective positioning into consumer's minds guarantees advantages for the destination, as it facilitates the tourists' decision making and allows customers to link the key attributes to the destination.

The most important part of tourism development and of attracting the attention to the tourist product is the creation of a hospitable informative environment capable of characterizing the different possibilities offered to visitors by destination. Previous studies published in respectful academic journals showed that this component is one of the basic provisions of the concept of tourist destinations marketing. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish the concept of formation and development of the destination brand which is generally aimed at the territory recognition, differentiation and promotion.

Consequently, the author distinguishes tentatively two main stages of the destination marketing: positioning, which is based on the identification of the unique strengths of travel destinations (their specifying or creation) and the promotion of destinations. In this way, positioning originally is the conceptual fundamental for the promotional strategies development, for planning the marketing communication programme, for determination of the key aspects of the messages content and the choice of optimal tools for the dissemination of information.

3. Methodology

For the purpose of this study, an internet sources monitoring and qualitative content analysis of the information about Latvia travel destinations was conducted, as well as the investigation of the variety of publications in media and brand attributes (slogans and logotypes) was carried out.

This study research procedure consisted of the following steps:

- 1) Scientific papers and monographs informative analysis and generalization, comparative analysis and synthesis method employment. An extensive literature survey was done through the secondary data sources and the review of literature was of immense support to enhance the knowledge about destination positioning, its determination and its importance in destination marketing.
- 2) Internet sources monitoring (csb.gov.lv – official statistic data, Latvia.travel – Official Latvian Tourism Portal, meeting.lv – Guide to Latvia, lonelyplanet.com – Official Portal of famous guidebooks publisher, tripadvisor.com – the largest website for travelers and tourist community) and content analysis of web pages for creating the ranking of destinations of Latvia and determining the key points in destination marketing strategy applicable for Latvia and its cities selected for analysis.

- 3) Qualitative content analysis based on a semiotic interpretation of the information about Latvia travel destinations and the offered benefits for their visitors.

Content analysis as a method of analysing written, verbal or visual communication messages is a widespread approach in the field of destination marketing and is often used for achieving various goals.

Websites are often analyzed via using semantic network analysis and content analysis methods to get insight of what authors were communicating about destinations and their travel experience. Comparative content analysis of DMO (Destination marketing organizations) and user-generated photography in study of visual destination images of Peru [25, p.592] considers the picture as a whole, and is concerned with investigating how the content and composition of a picture communicate intended messages through signs and symbols about the place or the object they depict. Govers and Go [11, p.82] have argued, that the visual and textual contents of web pages are important for creating the concept of place. Their study analyzes how destination identity is projected through the use of photographic imagery and narratives in an online environment in the context of marketing fast growing tourist destination such as Dubai.

Olivia H. Jenkins [12, p.4] emphasizes, that content analysis of written information, such as guidebooks or visual information including photographs in travel brochures, can provide a great deal of information about the images projected of tourist destinations.

4. Results

4.1. Destination marketing in Latvia

The market of visitors has grown for the last decade both in Europe and Latvia. The number of tourist-visits to Latvia has significantly increased during the last years.

With a coastline of 531 km along the Baltic Sea, Latvia is bordered by Estonia, Lithuania, Russia and Belarus. With over 48 percent of its territory covered by forests, a vast network of free-flowing rivers and thousands of lakes, Latvia is one of Europe's best-preserved havens for a wide variety of wildlife. Latvia is known as the Green Land due to its many forests.

Latvia area consists of 14 structured cities and 21 municipalities. The country has a tradition of tourism development; it actively works on the country tourism brand development and tries to increase its recognition.

Latvia lacks of a strong and homogenous image – one single association that could encourage foreign tourists to choose Latvia as a travel destination. The recognition of Latvia and its competitiveness in the international market is still low. To promote the recognition of Latvia

worldwide, it is necessary to create a united Latvian tourism image that attracts foreign tourists and is accepted by the local population.

The tourism brand platform of Latvia is based on the concept of *unhurried* leisure in Latvia. "Latvia – best enjoyed slowly!" is in step with Slow Tourism' which is rapidly gaining popularity worldwide. Unhurried or "slow tourism" as a separate branch of tourism first was defined in Italy and is depicted by a snail. By now, Slow Tourism is offered in Italy, France, Ireland and England, Switzerland, Spain, Greece, Russia and Scandinavia as well.

Destination marketing strategy which is used for the development of tourism in Latvia is not only applied at the national level but also at the level of regions and even individual cities. Undoubtedly, small towns of Latvia cannot claim to be well-known and well-recognized brands in the international tourist market, though they actively seek to emphasize their identity using the tools of marketing communication oriented on increasing their recognisability and attracting visitors in the domestic tourism market of Latvia.

Currently Riga is the tourist centre of Latvia that attracts the largest number of tourists. Nevertheless, the recent years the State Tourism Development Bureau (TAVA) aspires to draw the tourists' attention not only to the capital city, but also to the regions: Kurzeme, Zemgale, Vidzeme and Latgale, which have a number of attractions and places of interest. In their turn, the local government of each city seeks to develop their tourism, to engage tourists to visit the local attractions, to explore the sightseeing points, to take part in local events and festivals, and to get acquainted with local traditions on the basis of existing tourism resources and the creation of new tourism products. Thus, a certain image of a city is formed. Cities of Latvia use a number of branding tools to enhance the effect of a particular image formation, and also to follow the widespread trends of marketing use in urban development and communication capabilities.

4.2. Determination of the most recommended for visiting destinations in Latvia

The author has selected cities recommended for visiting by analyzing the information posted on the Internet tourist resources; there was composed a rating of these cities on the basis of the presence of references on the destination and its position in the list of each of the analyzed resource. Originally Riga, the capital of Latvia, was not taken into consideration in the rating arrangement for two reasons: firstly, Riga sightseeing attractions undoubtedly occupy a leading position in these resources rankings; secondly, the author believes that in this study a comparison of positioning of such well-known on an international level destination as Riga is inappropriate, since the other listed towns are mostly focused on the neighbouring countries and on the domestic, inter-

regional tourism. The author also does not take into account the specific reference on such tourist facilities as nature parks, castles and palaces, which are often positioned separately.

The analysis revealed 40 references to tourist destinations. The results of this analysis are presented in the table below (Table 1). The rating had been prepared according to the position which was held by the city on each resource: references in the upper rows increased the value of the final result by a factor respectively.

Most of the cities were recommended as “must visited” for several times in the analyzed sources; this fact allowed counting how many times the city was mentioned in the sources. The city referred on the 1st page or on the top positions in the information material on the analyzed web-resource was taken into account with a corresponding coefficient (1.2-1.5). Thus, while estimating the most popular destinations of Latvia, the author tried to consider first of all the most beneficial position of information on a web page, and secondly, the highest probability of implementing this information by the web resource users; it is based on the fact that the information located in the upper rows has a greater chance to be seen and read.

Table 1

Latvian destinations ranking

Group	Relative rate	Number of points	Destination
I. «Leaders»	> 70%	10-12	Jurmala, Liepaja, Ventspils,
II. «Successful applicants»	50-70%	7-9	Kuldiga, Cesis, Sigulda, Daugavpils
III. «Sustainable followers»	30-50%	4-6	Bauska, Tukums, Jelgava, Talsi, Saulkrasti, Valmiera
IV. «Unstable condition»	<30%	1-3	Ogre, Lielvarde, Jekabpils, Saldus, Salacgrīva, Ainaži, Limbazi, Valka, Smiltene, Madona, Rezekne, Ludza, Balvi, Kraslava, Kolka, Roja, Sabile, Aglona, Pāvilosta, Līgatne, Dobeles, Preiļi, Kandava, Salaspils, Alsunga, Alūksne, Gulbene

Source: the table is compiled by the author

Basing on the assessment conducted and on the aggregation of the results of the frequency of references found on specified Internet resources, destinations were segregated into 4 groups according to the number of points accumulated (column “Number of points” of Table 1).

The names of groups were formulated on the basis of a widely used methodology for assessing the competitiveness of enterprises and the results interpretation on the basis of comparing the final result as a percentage out of the maximum amount of points accumulated.

On the basis of the worked out segregation of cities according to the frequency and the location of references on the most popular travel portals, it can be assumed that destinations ascribed to the groups with the relative index of more than 50% are more interesting and attractive for tourists. These destinations that are exactly the most popular and recommended for visiting; they have been selected for the next stage of the analysis: considering the messages from the point of the specified identifying features and transferring the desired position by means of symbols and tools of marketing communication.

All cities subjected to analysis, according to the official tourist site Latvia.travel are included in Top10 places of Latvia, with the exception of Daugavpils (Sigulda mentioned together with Turaida).

4.3. The identity and positioning of destinations created by marketing communications and branding tools

The results of the next phase of the study are based on the analysis of the content of information published and promoted through communication on the Internet in order to focus the attention of potential visitors to certain attractions, peculiarities and other characteristics having special value from point of view of tourism.

Internet is an important marketing channel for destinations as it makes a lot of information available to potential tourists; and at the same time, it has allowed tourists and resident population to amplify their traditional channels of influence as opinion makers. This fact has forced the destinations to invest many resources: time, effort and money; but very few of them have made a real effort to quantify the efficiency of its communication channel. Therefore, the semantic core of the message has been determined by the following tools and channels of communication: logo, tag line / motto, main keywords through the search results as well as image's search, official tourism web sites of each destinations, Official Latvian Tourism Portal and Portal of Regional development indicators module – State Regional Development Agency (raim.gov.lv). This information can be considered as a definition of the main distinguishing features of a certain city that is the primary basis for the formation of the desired position of the city. The results of this stage of the study are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Specific and identifying features and peculiarities, positioned and promoted in symbols and communications

Destination / Attribute	Logo	Slogan/ motto	Google search	Google image results, main keywords	Latvia. travel.lv	Official tourism web site of destination	rainm.gov.lv
Jurmala	Sandy relief; harmonic rhythm of the city	—	The biggest resort city in Latvia; White sandy beach; the sea, healthy air, spacious pine forests	Sea, beach, summer	Official resort	No some identity symbols or signs. The biggest resort city in the Baltic States	The largest littoral resort city in the Baltic States
Liepaja	A logo isn't used; The visual element – the stylized image of a bird	City where the wind is born; “Liepaja inspires”	City in western Latvia, located on the Baltic Sea. Blue waves of the sea, the port, the modern architecture	View of the city, architecture	The city of wind	Wind, the whitest sand (beach), Concert hall “Great Amber”. The largest mechanical organ in the world; The only military Prison in Europe open to tourists in Europe	The special aura of the city. A touch of modesty and asperity, yet majestic and rebellious. Genuine and real

Ventspils	City on the seashore; Castle	"A city respecting the past, looking to the future and bustling with activity today.	A town in northwestern Latvia in the Courland historical region of Latvia	Cows, seaport, promenade, town square	Livonian charm and its impressive seaside. One of the oldest but fastest growing towns in Latvia.	Ventspils' venti, cows, Livonian order castle, sea, events	A city where its people respect the past, look forward to the future and work very hard today. A family-friendly city
Kuldīga	Old bridge, symbolized by color the Latvian flag	A town with a soul	Ancient Hanseatic town in Kurzeme. The widest waterfall ledge in Europe.	Bridge, waterfall, medieval historical center; river; the old town	A medieval town, the opportunity to participate in cultural events, a romantic holiday	Old Bridge, Old town, history and culture, nature tourism, gastronomic tourism	—
Cēsis	Medieval castle	Cēsis – ancient times today	Cēsis was one of the candidate cities for the title of European Capital of Culture 2014	Medieval castle	One of the oldest towns in Latvia, the former Livonian Master's residence, a member of the old Hanseatic League	Medieval castle, Old town	One of the oldest towns in Latvia; a place where Latvian flag was born. edieval castle, old town center and picturesque parks.

Sigulda	City name and its slogan	„Sigulda enjoy!”	Switzerland, nature	Nature, Gauja, Turaida castle	The Switzerland of Vidzeme; landmarks, outdoor recreation, culture and wild nature	Third Europe's Best Big-Time Small Destination 2014	A nature pearl of Latvia with an excellent quality of life, developed tourism, sports, education, and culture.
Daugavpils	City name, symbolizing the city diversity.	„Daugavpils is...”	A city in southeastern Latvia, located on the banks of the Daugava River; fortress, Marko Rotko, multicultural	City's sights, fortress	City near Lithuania and Belarus; River Daugava. Mark Rothko Art Centre, Daugavpils Fortress	Daugavpils fortress, Mark Rothko Art Center, Church hill. Logo	A multicultural, multifunctional city. Near from the border with Lithuania, Belarus, Russia; Students' city; the Daugavpils Fortress; the Mark Rothko art Centre, the Church hill, the first pedestrian street in Latvia

Source: the table is compiled by the author

Therefore, we can make the conclusions about the destinations positioning that follow from the messages, brand instruments and other marketing communications sources:

Jurmala - resort city, sandy beach and sea;

Liepaja – city and port on the coast of a sea, where blows wind;

Ventspils – city with cows, Livonian order castle and many events;

Kuldīga – medieval town with widest waterfall and old bridge;

Cēsis – one of the oldest towns in Latvia with medieval castle;

Sigulda – beautiful landmarks, nature and outdoor recreation;

Daugavpils – city on the banks of the Daugava River, where located Mark Rothko Art Center, fortress.

The main conclusion is as follows: there is no clear strategy for using positioning for the majority of the Latvia towns as travel destinations.

Basing on the analysis of the survey results, it can be concluded that the most clearly defined position is formed for the towns Cēsis and Kuldīga, since all the analyzed reports regardless of the source of communication can be traced to a similar message, based on the certain characteristics (Cēsis is a medieval castle, Kuldīga is the widest waterfall and the old bridge).

As for the other cities, their positioning comprises a number of highly controversial or neutral points; from the point of view of the marketing concept, it will affect for sure the results of attraction of the visitors. Moreover, one identity feature is often emphasized through the slogan, while logo emphasizes different feature.

5. Conclusion

The main conclusion is follow: there is no clear strategy for using positioning for the majority of the Latvia towns as travel destinations. The positioning of Latvia travel destinations is based on the defined features that are not peculiar and cannot form the identity of destination. Positioning should be the platform for such processes as branding, image formation and communications, and other activities. The promoted position must be delivered to the target audience and after that the audience perceiving can be investigated.

Basing on the principles of products and services positioning, the following requirements for the successful positioning of the Latvia cities can be formulated:

1)The clear understanding of the target audience (markets) and their individual segments is needed;

2)It is necessary to find / create the attractive characteristics of the territory for successful positioning; if it is possible, to find / create the unique characteristics of destinations that meet the needs of the target audience. As Pike and Ryan mention [19], two important implications of positioning theory confront the destination marketer. Firstly, which

destination attributes should feature in positioning campaigns and which should be omitted? Secondly, the research requirements to analyze the position held in the range of different markets and travel contexts of interest to stakeholders are likely to be prohibitive.

3) position is intended to differentiate the destination among many other proposals, that are struggling in the tourist market for the attention of visitors; hence, there is necessary to monitor the position of direct competitors aimed at determining the strategy of positioning and at departing from the competitors;

4) Attractive position should be communicated to the target audience. At the same time, the position should be clear and simple, not overloaded with information, so it can be easily transmitted during the process of communication by employment of communicative tools and to be correctly perceived and interpreted by the target audience. The development of information and communication technologies and their increasing use has radically changed the relationship between the destinations and their visitors.

Consequently, tourism destination marketing and the branding of regional tourism destinations are important planning tools for regional governments.

Using a uniform common characteristic and its replication by the communication facilities contributes to the formation of the territory identity and its differentiation from other destinations, as well as a clear correlation of the city with a certain characteristic in the perception of the target audiences and the general public.

6. Implications and future research

This study focuses on the relationship between Latvia travel destinations positioning through the messages found on the Internet sources and on possibility of this communication tool to create the identity of the destination and to differentiate it from other destinations. Future research may be done on perceiving the destinations of Latvia by visitors. Moreover, the researcher could evaluate the positioned features by such criteria as significance, value, uniqueness, etc., and also, taking into account the plans of local government and the tourism development strategy, the researcher could develop a unique concept of positioning the town and follow it in the marketing and communication activities.

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Short Essay

Jules Verne and Tourism

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Abstract:

Jules Verne must be read, not only by lovers of literature, but also by tourism experts. The reasons explaining this fact are due to Verne's extraordinary role in anticipating current touristic tendencies. He manages to integrate these elements in the plot of his novels without boring the reader. He mingles touristic insights with fascinating suspense involving opponents in dramatic fights and quarrels. But as a consequence many readers tend not to realize how much Verne is interested in the service sector. He tries to develop a blueprint for the development of tourism in a country and at the same time he can entertain the reader who understands his economic suggestions quite easily. Thus nowadays it is highly recommended to analyze Verne's works again. They provide essential information on the undertow of tourism nowadays.

The following questions should be answered in an analysis of Verne's touristic descriptions:

(1) Which categories of tourism does the French author depict? (2) In which light does he present them? (3) Which ideological background lies behind his statements? (4) What can current research derive from Verne's novels in the context of tourism?

In order to gain tangible results we have chosen the novel *Les Indes Noires*, which deals extensively with Scotland in the second part of the 19th century, for analysis. This choice is based on several important factors: (1) Scotland belongs to those countries that are rising as a powerful tourist destination; (2) Edinburgh is frequently chosen as a cultural hotspot attracting tourists for various reasons (e.g. its summer festival or breathtaking ancient city center); (3) *Les Indes Noires* offers a breathtaking narration of events that act as a symbol of touristic developments in the late 20th and 21st century and therefore delivers interesting results which can be generalized.

Key words:

literature and tourism, Jules Verne, 19th century, visionary role, current developments in tourism

Introduction

Jules Verne must be read, not only by lovers of literature, but also by tourism experts. The reasons explaining this fact are due to Verne's extraordinary role in anticipating current touristic tendencies. He manages to integrate these elements in the plot of his novels without boring the reader. He mingles touristic insights with fascinating suspense involving opponents in dramatic fights and quarrels. But as a consequence many readers tend not to realize how much Verne is interested in the service sector. He tries to develop a blueprint for the development of tourism in a country and at the same time he can entertain the reader who understands his economic suggestions quite easily. Thus nowadays it is highly recommended analyze Verne's works again. They provide essential information on the undertow of tourism nowadays.

The following questions should be answered in an analysis of Verne's touristic descriptions:

- Which categories of tourism does the French author depict?
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- Which ideological background lies behind his statements?
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In order to gain tangible results we have chosen the novel *Les Indes Noires*, which deals extensively with Scotland in the second part of the 19th century, for analysis. This choice is based on several important factors:

- a) Scotland belongs to those countries that are rising as a powerful tourist destination
- b) Edinburgh is frequently chosen as a cultural hotspot attracting tourists for various reasons (e.g. its summer festival or breathtaking ancient city center)
- c) *Les Indes Noires* offers a breathtaking narration of events that act as a symbol of touristic developments in the late 20th and 21st century and therefore delivers interesting results which can be generalized.

Economy related tourism (Tourisme économique)

Verne excels in exploiting all sorts of tourism. He even goes so far as to consider the national economy a source of touristic income. He compares Scottish charcoal resources with other European regions and their potential. By doing so, he goes into detail and praises the extensive opportunities awaiting Scotland. In contrast to other parts of the world, the northern part of the UK promises continuing opportunities to provide growth and progress. Thanks to this information Verne attracts the reader

who feels compelled to find out more about the country and will maybe visit it. He/she thus acts in the way Verne intended. In his book the economy constitutes the basis of tourism that attracts the reader and might influence his choice of holiday destinations. The economy serves as a marketing tool which guarantees that the attraction you feel towards a country is later transformed into a real trip. All in all, Verne anticipates tendencies of modern tourism, he is one of the first to see potential in linking classic sectors of industry (in this case the charcoal industry) with touristic development. Here is how he rouses the reader's interest.

Now, at the time when the events related in this story took place, some of the most important mines of Scottish coal beds had been exhausted by too rapid working. In the region which extends between Edinburgh and Glasgow, for a distance of ten or twelve miles, laid the Aberfoyle colliery, of which the engineer, James Starr, had so long directed the works. For ten years these mines had been abandoned. No new seams had been discovered, although the soundings had been carried to a depth of fifteen hundred or even of two thousand feet, and when James Starr had retired, it was with the full conviction that even the smallest vein had been completely exhausted (Verne, 2012, p. 25).

Verne describes the decreasing amount of charcoal, all the resources might soon disappear; however, as he later explains, Scotland might resist thanks to its incredible blessings of nature that will last longer than elsewhere. The tourist thus immediately sees interest in the British destination.

Tourism in cities

Verne recognizes the chances residing in attracting tourists to cities; they offer an outstanding potential to improve the economy of a country. In the case of Scotland this applies particularly to Edinburgh where the author paints a portrait of classic tourism pandering to the affluent middle and upper classes. These people are keen to assemble two perspectives when travelling. On the one hand, they would like to get entertained during their trips, meeting other people and discovering new traditions as well as customs. On the other hand, they intend to learn a lot, they are particularly drawn to the history of a country which they want to find illustrated by the city they are strolling through. In addition, they feel tempted to find traces of literature in a city. As a visitor they would like to follow the path taken by the heroes of their favorite novels set in the relevant region.

In terms of literature Scotland is closely tied to the works by Walter Scott. Especially his bestseller *Waverly* seems to be on Verne's mind, as he constantly mentions its protagonist in *Les Indes Noires* seeing this as

an opportunity to enrich these hints with historical information, thus creating a very dense network of insights into Scottish culture.

Verne does not act as a precursor of modern day city tourism; on the contrary, he is focused on a traditional and ever-lasting notion of getting to know a city. He stresses the value of widening one's knowledge and providing education. In his view, city tourism is not about walking through a place according to one's own interest and preferences; quite the opposite, it consists in offering the framework for improving one's knowledge and detecting the sights you have read of at school and university. The tourism sector has to act accordingly.

Sustainability

Verne is a precursor of sustainable tourism. Of course, he has not advocated the type of tourism we think of today, including short distances, local products and people's involvement in the visited country. But on the other hand, he has shaped a modern version of tourism still relevant nowadays by stressing three tenets: first and foremost, he insists on keeping resources available and on not wasting them. Second, he stresses the idea of the local population benefitting from this branch of the economy. Third, he points out the importance of unspoiled and well preserved landscapes, the guarantee for a large number of tourists coming each year. All these three elements crystallize in his appeal for the protection of Scottish nature: the reserves of charcoal should not be exploited to a great extent. Nature should be treated carefully; if people run out of their resources, this would amount to a loss of everything. Normal life would cease to exist, people could not make their living and no visitor would be attracted anymore. Scotland would be deprived of its reputation as an appealing destination and fall into oblivion.

As usual, Verne does not present these insights outspokenly. However indirectly, as the whole novel *Les Indes Noires* is so closely linked to tourism, we can derive such an attitude towards the touristic future of Scotland.

Science and Adventure Park

Verne anticipates developments of modern day tourism in so far as he depicts a gigantic science and adventure park: Located in the coal area of Southern Scotland, this area constitutes the heart of Verne's vision of future tourism. Originally the adventure park was used as a mine, providing precious sources of energy for the British. However, the author imagines more and connects an interesting perspective with it: the subterranean aisles and archways appeal – due to their enormous dimensions and breathtaking vistas – to numerous travelers and emerge

as one of the centers of future Scottish tourism. Verne recognizes enormous potential because of different reasons:

- a) Tourists experience an unforgettable adventure underground.
- b) They can even spend the night in those stunning caves which are paralleled to the famous Mammoth caves in the USA.
- c) Travelers dispose of simple access to the caves and do not feel disturbed by the ongoing exploitation of the mine.
- d) The caves form a part of a round trip through Scotland comprising essential sights of the country.
- e) Safety seems to be guaranteed, tourists need not worry about any accidents occurring regularly.
- f) The caves cater to the needs of a large target audience ranging from the young to elderly people; in other words, they offer a real success story (Verne, 2012, p. 127-136).

The adventure park does not exist in real life; however, what is really striking is the fact that Verne deals with the touristic dimensions of the mesmerizing caves explicitly. He acts as an author who integrates tourism as an authentic and credible element into his novel, weaving it perfectly into the plot. Similar to Pierre Loti he can thus be considered one of the first French writers coping with the evolution of tourism in a work of fiction, particularly novels.

Intercultural notions

Verne knows well that travelling means discovering a new culture and merging with it. If you want to really benefit from your trips abroad you should be willing to search for the idiosyncrasies of the visited country. As a tourist you should widen your knowledge and really find out how the locals live, how they cook and dwell and which myths they tell to each other. Verne advertises a type of tourism that focuses on an in depth visit, being sharply opposed to mass tourism which completely neglects the characteristics of the destination and just caters to physical and superficial needs.

In order to prove his point, Verne tells the story of the numerous haunted castles that somehow shape Scotland's identity; people love their century old castles reminding them of ancient glory and better days gone by. Nostalgia and melancholia thus influence their life, prompting them to write songs and stories of the haunted houses and the tragedies they pertain to:

At this period Dundonald Castle, a refuge for all the stray goblins of the country, was completely deserted. It stood on the top of a high rock, two miles from the town, and was seldom visited. Sometimes a few strangers took it into their heads to explore these old historical remains, but then they

always went along. The inhabitants of Irvine would not have taken them at any price. Indeed, several legends were based on the story of certain “fire-maidens”, who haunted the old castle (Verne, 2012, p. 98).

Another pleasant way for Verne to come to grips with national identity is to describe eating habits and national dishes (haggis for Scotland). The visitor should gain specific insights by tasting and choosing meals with special care; they do not only strengthen his/her energy, they also provide the traveler with a sense of what everyday life is all about. By analyzing the local people’s dishes, the tourist can easily imagine their standard of living and the national character (for example elegant, down to earth, straightforward):

But the principal dish consisted of a “haggis”, the national pudding, made of meat and barley meal. This remarkable dish, which inspired the poet Burns with one of his best odes, shared the fate of all good things in this world – it passed away like a dream. Madge received the sincere compliments of her guest. The dinner ended with cheese and oatcake, accompanied by a few small glasses of “usquebaugh”, capital whisky, five and twenty years old – just Harry’s age. The repast lasted a good hour (Verne, 2012, p. 48).

All in all, Verne pleads for a very modern type of tourism that is still being developed nowadays: he encourages individual travel allowing people to think outside the box, to leave old patterns of thinking behind and to foster mutual understanding. Intercultural tourism was already a big player back in the 19th century.

Transport and tourism

How should tourists move around in Scotland to approach the really breath-taking sights? Verne emerges as somebody advocating public transport. Of course, back in his days individual travel on horseback or by carriage was much slower; thus it is not astonishing that Verne praises the advantages of the newly built railway that takes you for example to the most stunning lakes in Scotland. There you can switch to the steamboat, for instance, to continue your journey so that you get the most out of it.

In this light, Verne can again be seen as an author anticipating current tendencies consisting in opposing mass tourism based on individual traffic. In Verne’s opinion tourists should rely on technological breakthroughs in transport, but in accordance with nature. Means of public transport, such as train services, are consequently the best solution.

All in all, Verne tries to assemble technological advances, the advantages of public transport and sustainable methods to achieve

progress in tourism. Only if these factors are considered can a country really rise to meet the challenges of an influx of numerous tourists, quite contemporary, isn't it?

Comparisons and conclusion

Verne's approach has been put into practice for example at the Pynycyllte aqueduct in Wales; it reflects exactly the same approach as seen in Verne's texts. The sight represents a modern feature of the touristic offers typical of Wales; visitors cannot only enjoy the view of the world heritage site, they can really profit from it; as recommended by Verne, tourists take action on it; they wander around and mostly spend their time boating, covering impressive distances. In other words, they make the sight their own, like recommended in *Les Indes Noires*, they get to understand the core of the building and really understand the background story the building is telling. As a result they come back and become loyal customers contributing to a very satisfying result of the local tourist season.

Let us now compare Verne with a star of touristic literature (Bill Bryson) to judge Verne's contributions even better. If we do so, we come to the conclusion that Verne's vision is more daring and poignant, but also more relevant. Billy Bryson is focused on anecdotes, the right pun or the convenient joke; in many cases he does not attempt to provide future perspectives of tourism but suitable ways of showing his sense of humor, his manner of attracting readers.

Verne, by contrast, delivers concrete visions based on science fiction. He particularly manages to anticipate an outstanding current phenomenon of tourism (think of the adventure park underground in *Les Indes Noires*): guests want to identify with what they see. As a consequence they flock to destinations that do not offer farfetched insights and contexts (like the classical picture galleries) but elements being part of people's everyday life. Valentia in county Kerry Ireland, for example, has applied for being classified as a UNESCO World Heritage site as it commemorates the 150th anniversary of the first telegram sent across the Atlantic. This was rendered possible because of first cable placed in the sea linking Europe to the New World. Such a sight attracts different types of tourists including visitors from China or other countries with an emerging middle class. These travelers feel close to the above mentioned destination as they find a similar technological history and patterns at home.

The same situation is typical of sights such as harbor cruises in the big cities of the North and the Baltic Sea, the historic store house district in Hamburg or the visits of the Volkswagen production site in Wolfsburg or Dresden (Autocity and Glass Manufactory).

Verne's works reflect these tendencies and show us the way tourism has to take in the 21st century. Future researchers thus have to analyze

which surprising insights the texts written 130 years ago harbor. Especially novels particularly modelled on a predominance of the economy and technology seem to be eligible for scientific work: *Around the World in 80 Days*, *20000 Leagues under the Sea* (achievements of a trip in an ultramodern submarine) or *L'Ile à Helice* (an artificial Island floating in the oceans provide the pretext for an adventurous stay) could for example be chosen to find out in more detail in how far Verne's landscapes have been leading the way contemporary tourism has embarked on. So let us start work.

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Industry News

The 3rd International Conference of Applied Linguistics to Foreign Language Teaching

The III International Conference of Applied Linguistics to Foreign Language Teaching 3rd with the title Towards Multilingualism was organized by the Nebrija University, in June 2016 at the Dehesa de la Villa campus in Madrid. The conference aimed to be a meeting point for researchers and teachers or experts dedicated to teaching, and contributed to the development and dissemination of new work in the fields of Linguistics Applied to Teaching and Foreign Language Didactics. Representatives of the six linguistic communities discussed in two round tables about the challenges of the multilingual society and about different issues related to intercultural communication and language policy. The University College of Business in Prague was represented by Dr. Hana Romová from the Department of Foreign Languages.

(hr)

The 19th International Colloquium on Regional Sciences, Čejkovice, Czech Republic

The International Colloquium on Regional Sciences was held from June 15th till 17th, 2016 in Hotel Zámek, Čejkovice. The Colloquium represents a platform for meeting of experts whose common interest is the research of European region issues and above all, the Czech and Slovak ones. The paper of doc. Ing. Alžbeta Királová, Ph.D. and Ing. Iveta Hamarneh, Ph.D. entitled Enhancing Tourism SMEs Development through Food Tourism in the Czech Regions is published in the conference proceedings. The conference proceedings will be sent for evaluation into Thomson Reuters Conference Proceedings Citation Index. This paper is based on research project The Influence of Food Tourism on the Development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in the Czech Republic, which is supported by the University College of Business in Prague (FRV 1/2015).

(ih)

The Annual General Meeting of NECSTouR, 13–14 June, 2016, Brussels, Belgium

The Annual General Meeting of NECSTou has been held in June 13–14, 2016 in Brussels. More than 100 participants from several European Regions and Institutions attended this event. At the end of its

AGM, NECSTouR organised a Thematic Conference entitled Synergies between Tourism and Cultural Heritage for Growth and Jobs In the framework of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018. Doc. Ing. Alžbeta Királová, Ph.D. joined the meeting and will continue her work as a member of the Academic Committee.

(ak)

The International Conference European Rivers and Towns, July 1st -2nd, 2016, Paris, France

The international European Rivers and Towns symposium: Creation, development and perspectives of a (re)newed conquest: Tourism, Leisure, Heritage was held in July 2016 in Paris at the Descartes amphitheatre in the Sorbonne University. Doc. Ing. Alžbeta Királová, Ph.D. from the University College of Business in Prague was the guest of the panel discussion of the conference. The conference aimed to explore these points within the framework of European cities. The objective is to highlight this European fundamental belief of the right to leisure activities and the right to adopt others. This is in relation to increased leisure and free time given in society before and now in the context of urban rivers. The Val-de-Marne Tourism Board is working with its local partners to enhance the banks of the Marne on a European scale. This conference contributed to creation of a European network of Riverside Cities, working on the development of tourism and leisure along urban rivers. This network would candidate to the Cultural Route of the Council of Europe certification.

(ak)

The Annual Conference Geographical Thinking as Actual Social Challenge, September 5–7, 2016, České Budějovice, Czech Republic

The annual conference organized by Czech Geographical Society was held in České Budějovice, Czech Republic from 5th till 7th September, 2016. The aim of the conference was to discuss the current research movements and approaches in the Czech and Global Geography. The section Geography of Tourism was also included in the programme. Ing. Jana Kolomazníková, Ph.D. presented a paper Teaching Geography with Philosophy for Children Approach. The methodology enables teachers to facilitate a communal dialogue with young people to investigate and try to find answers about problems and issues in the world today.

(jk)

ATLAS Annual Conference, Tourism, Lifestyles and Locations, 14–16 September, 2016, Canterbury, United Kingdom

The inter disciplinary themes of tourism, locations and lifestyles have been brought together under one conference with the aim to push the boundaries of understanding of tourism and its relationship to modern lifestyle and to destinations in the contemporary environment. In 2016, the 25th anniversary of ATLAS is celebrated, therefore the conference was designed to bring together all old, current and new ATLAS members as well as welcome non-members to the ATLAS family. Doc. Ing. Alžbeta Kiráľová, Ph.D. presented a paper entitled Diversification of Prague Tourism Offer with Focus on the Vltava Riverside that is included into the book of abstracts. This paper is based on research project Diversification of Prague Tourism Offer with Focus on the Vltava Riverside – The Primary and Secondary Offer Analysis, GA/2016/6-101. Doc. Kiráľová was elected to the Board of ATLAS.

(ak)

The 6th International Scientific Conference Management 2016, University of Prešov in Prešov, Faculty of Management, September 29 – October 2, 2016, Nový Smokovec, Slovak Republic

The 6th International Scientific Conference Management 2016: International Business and Management, Domestic Particularities and Emerging Markets in the Light of Research was held from September 29 till October 2, 2016 in the Spa Nový Smokovec, Slovak Republic. The aim of the conference was to present the latest research results in the field of management, business and social sciences and the prospective use of innovative scientific methods and the intellectual capital in the dynamic market environment. The paper of doc. Ing. Alžbeta Kiráľová, Ph.D. and Ing. Iveta Hamarneh, Ph.D. entitled Diversification of Tourism Offer in Prague as a Tool for Sustainable Development is published in the conference proceedings. This paper is based on research project Diversification of Prague Tourism Offer with Focus on the Vltava Riverside – The Primary and Secondary Offer Analysis, GA/2016/6-101. The paper of doc. Ing. Alžbeta Kiráľová, Ph.D. and Ing. Iveta Hamarneh, Ph.D. entitled Gastronomy and Tourism as a Tool of Regional Development - the Case of Ústí nad Labem Region is also published in the conference proceedings. This paper is based on research project The Influence of Food Tourism on the Development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in the Czech Republic, which is supported by the University College of Business in Prague (FRV 1/2015).

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The 24th International Geographical Conference, Department of Geography and Regional Development FNS CPU, October 12–13, 2016, Nitra, Slovak Republic

The 24th International Geographical Conference: Geographical Aspects of Central Europe - New Challenges for Development organized by the Department of Geography and Regional Development FNS CPU in Nitra was held from October 12 till 13, 2016. This event follows a long tradition of geographic, scientific conferences held since 1992 regularly in Brno and Nitra. The paper of doc. Ing. Alžbeta Királová, Ph.D. and Ing. Iveta Hamarneh, Ph.D. entitled Riverside Tourism in an Urban Area – How can it work? is published in the conference proceedings. This paper is based on research project Diversification of Prague Tourism Offer with Focus on the Vltava Riverside – The Primary and Secondary Offer Analysis, GA/2016/6-101. The paper of doc. Ing. Alžbeta Királová, Ph.D. and Ing. Iveta Hamarneh, Ph.D. titled Food Tourism in the Czech Regions – Trends and Opportunities is also published in the conference proceedings. This paper is based on research project The Influence of Food Tourism on the Development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in the Czech Republic, which is supported by the University College of Business in Prague (FRV 1/2015). The conference proceedings will be sent for evaluation into Thomson Reuters Conference Proceedings Citation Index.

(ih)

International Conference A Better Education for a Better Europe, October 6–9, 2016, Locarno, Switzerland

The Conference has been intervened proactively in the European debate on culture, scientific research, education, local development and employment. Doc. Ing. Alžbeta Királová, Ph.D. was invited as a key note speaker of the conference with the paper entitled A Better Education for a Better Europe.

(ak)

The 7th International Conference Region in the Development of Society, October 20, 2016, Brno, Czech Republic

The conference was held on 20th October, 2016 at the Faculty of Regional Development and International Studies in Brno, Czech Republic. Main topics of the conference were: trends in rural development; economically viable, environmentally sensitive and culturally appropriate development of regions; migration and its impacts on regional development, regional policy and project management. Ing. Jana

Kolomazníková, Ph.D. presented the paper Sanitation Safety in South Ethiopia focused on factors affecting toilet usage and sanitation behaviour in rural areas in South Ethiopia. It was based on the field research realised in 2015. The results were discussed in local context of economic, political, social and environmental development.

(jk)

International Scientific Conference Schola nova, quo vadis?, November 7, 2016, Prague, Czech Republic

The international scientific conference Schola nova, quo vadis? was organized by the Department of Economic Teaching Methodology, University of Economics, Prague in cooperation with the Department of Education, University of Economics, Bratislava and the University College of Business in Prague. The integral part of the conference was the workshop, for teachers of economic subjects at secondary schools and universities, with the title Activating methods and interactive board in the teaching process of economic subjects. The papers of doc. Ing. Pavel Krpálek, CSc. (Evaluation Processes as the Core Premise of Quality Management System), Ing. Iveta Hamarneh, Ph.D. (Description and Analysis of the Implications of Aging in Teaching and Examination Activity of the University Teacher) and Ing. Jana Kolomazníková, Ph.D. (Participatory Education with the Method of Philosophy for Children) is published in the conference proceedings. Doc. Ing. Pavel Krpálek, CSc. And Ing. Jana Kolomazníková, Ph.D. also presented their papers in the plenary session of the conference.

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Tradition and Innovation in Agriculture and Food Sector, Mosonmagyaróvár, November 10, 2016, Hungary

The international conference on Tradition and Innovation in Agriculture and Food Sector was held at the Széchenyi István University in Mosonmagyaróvár, Hungary. Doc. Ing. Alžbeta Kiráľová, Ph.D. and Ing. Iveta Hamarneh, Ph.D. presented the paper Traditional Local Gastronomy – a Way to Increase the Welfare of Rural Areas. This paper is based on research project The Influence of Food Tourism on the Development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in the Czech Republic, which is supported by the University College of Business in Prague (FRV 1/2015). The paper was included into the book of abstracts and the conference proceedings.

(ak)

The 5th International Conference of Safety and Security in Air Transport, Prague, Czech Republic

The fifth annual International Safety and Security Conference was held in the conference hall of the Vaclav Havel Airport Prague on 23rd and 24th November 2016. The 120 participants who represented 62 institutions were registered. Among them there were, for example, representatives of the Ministry of Transport, Civil Aviation Authority, Prague Airport, Czech Airlines, Air Navigation Services, Association of Air Operators and the Police of the Czech Republic. From the academia community there were representatives of the University College of Business in Prague, Czech Technical University in Prague, Brno University of Technology, University of Defence in Brno, University of Pardubice, Technical University of Košice, Technical University of Ostrava, the Police Academy in Prague and Loughborough University. Representatives of the state administration and universities discussed the current issues focusing on the behavioral analysis of the passengers, cyber security issues or unmanned aerial vehicle at the safety operations of air transport. At the conference there were presented papers on development and application of a new concept of security checks at airports and other critical infrastructure objects. The conference was organized in collaboration with Prague Airport and the University College of Business in Prague. Doc. Ing. Luboš Janko, CSc., prof. Ing. Zdeněk Žihla, CSc., Ing. Tomáš Děkan and Ing. Jan Zýka from the Department of Air Transport of University College of Business in Prague participated in the organization and discussions of the conference.

(lj)

Introduction to Aviation and Air Transport – New Book Published by Department of Air Transport of University College of Business in Prague

Prof. Ing. Zdeněk Žihla, CSc., a member of the Department of Air Transport, wrote in collaboration with the rector of the University College of Business in Prague doc. Ing. Jindřich Ploch, CSc. the publication Introduction to Aviation and Air Transport focused primarily on first-year students of bachelor and master degree. The one hundred thirty six pages publication is available in the library of the University College of Business in Prague.

(lj)

Conference How to be Accountable, Effective and Operational, November 12, 2016, Prague, Czech Republic

The conference with the leading Czech economists, entrepreneurs, and managers focused on possibilities how companies and entrepreneurs can flexibly and quickly respond to the changing business environment and enhance the ability to serve the public on the path to long-term prosperity. The conference was co-organized by University College of Business and doc. Ing. Alžběta Királová, Ph.D. was the chair of the Tourism section. The paper of doc. Ing. Alžběta Királová, Ph.D. entitled Diverzifikace nabídky jako nástroj udržitelného rozvoje destinací – na příkladu hlavního města Prahy was based on research project Diversification of Prague Tourism Offer with Focus on the Vltava Riverside – The Primary and Secondary Offer Analysis, GA/2016/6-101. The paper of Ing. Iveta Hamarneh, Ph. D. Vliv gastronomického cestovního ruchu na rozvoj malých a středních podniků was based on research project The Influence of Food Tourism on the Development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in the Czech Republic, which is supported by the University College of Business in Prague (FRV 1/2015).

(ak)

New Member of the Editorial Board

Newly distinguish colleague joined the Editorial Board of Journal of Tourism and Services from December 2016 – prof. Kevin Hannam, Ph.D.

Kevin Hannam is Professor of Tourism Mobilities in the Business School at Edinburgh Napier University, UK. He is a founding co-editor of the journals Mobilities and Applied Mobilities and co-editor of the books The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities Research, Tourism and Leisure Mobilities and Event Mobilities. He has a Ph.D. in geography from the University of Portsmouth, UK and is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society (FRGS), Vice-Chair of the Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research (ATLAS) and a research affiliate at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. Contact: Professor Kevin Hannam, Edinburgh Napier University, Business School, Craiglockhart Campus, Edinburgh, EH14 1DJ, email: k.hannam@napier.ac.uk

(ak)

Press Releases

Madrid, Spain, 1 June 2016
PR No. 16044

UNWTO and the Petra National Trust partner to promote sustainable tourism

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed by UNWTO and the Petra National Trust (PNT) with the aim to promote sustainable tourism policies in cultural tourism, to develop capacity building and knowledge sharing, and to conduct educational actions. The agreement was signed in Beijing, on the occasion of the recent First World Conference on Tourism for Development.

The MoU was signed by UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai, and the President of PNT's Board, HRH Princess Dana Firas

"The work developed by civil society organizations on the protection of heritage is a fundamental part of the tourism sector, and essential for the design and implementation of sustainable tourism initiatives involving and benefiting local communities. This agreement builds upon this principle," said Mr. Rifai during the signing ceremony.

"This partnership agreement marks a new milestone for the Petra National Trust and will serve as the framework for joint cooperation between us. PNT will work closely with UNWTO to place preservation of culture and heritage at the centre of tourism development, and to expand PNT's innovative cultural education and awareness programmes to local communities internationally. We thank UNWTO for their support and endorsement and look forward to a most fruitful partnership," said HRH Princess Dana Firas.

Madrid, Spain, 7 June 2016
PR No. 16045

Tourism's capacity to connect cultures discussed in Lebanon

The increasing relevance of religious and cultural tourism and the opportunities it offers to link the countries in the Mediterranean was the focus of a series of events on 'Connecting People and Cultures through Tourism in the Mediterranean region.' The events held in Maghdouche and Beirut, were organized by UNWTO and the Ministry of Tourism of Lebanon.

The first event - a round table on religious tourism, with the participation of CNN's John Deftierous - explored the challenges and

opportunities for the development of religious tourism routes in the Levant as well as cross-country pilgrimages and networks of religious tourism destinations as effective means to foster regional development and integration, cross-cultural exchanges, understanding and self-education and learning.

“Never before have so many people visited so many places and seen so many diverse cultures, traditions and faiths. Religious tourism can in fact be one of the most effective tools to foster mutual understanding and sustainable development” said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai opening the roundtable.

The meeting, held in Maghdouche, was followed by a ceremony organized by the Lebanese Ministry of Tourism marking the launch of ‘our Lady of Mantara’ as a destination for international religious tourism.

The second day was dedicated to the meeting of the Working Group of the Phoenicians’ Route Cultural Tourism Programme.

Michel Pharaon, Minister of Tourism of Lebanon, said “the Phoenician Route has cultural, humanitarian and tourism benefits, for Lebanon and 17 other Mediterranean and European Union countries while fitting UNWTO’s objectives, which has adopted this vital regional project.”

“The Phoenician route is widely recognized not only as a historical cultural and trade-based itinerary, but also as an initiative to interconnect all the diverse backgrounds existing in the region since ancient times. We are upon an unprecedented occasion to revive the identity of the Mediterranean and its tourism sector so that all societies in the region can capitalize the immense opportunities that it brings to 18 participating countries and tourism destinations across more than 2800 kilometers in terms of economic development and job creation,” said Mr. Rifai.

The events counted with the participation of the Ministries of Tourism of Lebanon, Palestine and Egypt and international organizations such as UNESCO and ASCAME. The Council of Europe was represented by Stefano Dominioni, Director of the European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR) and Executive Secretary of the Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA) on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe who expressed the full cooperation of the Council to the development of the Phoenicians’ Route as a cultural tourism programme.

The meeting concluded with the four key areas of focus as next steps: 1) the development of itineraries, 2) involving local communities, 3) joint marketing and promotion, and 4) travel facilitation.

The Phoenicians’ Route Cultural Tourism Programme provides a valuable opportunity to build upon the existing cultural route and facilitate the development of a strategic plan for tourism itineraries, engaging stakeholders in the region and encouraging the alignment of resources and funds for tourism product development, capital projects, visitor experiences, marketing and promotion.

Madrid, Spain, 9 June 2016
PR No. 16046

UNWTO addresses the impact of new technologies on the tourism sector in Japan

Over 400 participants from 26 countries gathered in the city of Nara, Japan, to discuss the impact that new technologies are having on the tourism sector and how these can help the sector to further develop at the UNWTO International Conference on Tourism and Technology. It was conducted within the framework of the 28th Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia from 1-4 June 2016.

The 28th Joint Commission's meeting discussed UNWTO's Programme of Work for Asia and the Pacific, the link between tourism and security, and the ethical approach of the sector. The Conference was the first of its kind organized by UNWTO to highlight the linkage between new technology and tourism in the Asia-Pacific region in order to examine the current emerging technologies that are of primary relevance to the tourism sector.

As summarised by Akihiko Tamura, Commissioner of the Japan Tourism Agency of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan at the Opening: "Our work embraces not only tourism, but also transportation and infrastructure policies that require the latest advanced technologies. Finding out how to raise travelers' satisfaction levels through various experiences and activities during their travels is a challenging but crucial task for us."

To this, the UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai added that "Two major revolutions have marked the last decades: the travel revolution, which has positioned tourism as a fundamental element of our lives, and the boom of new technologies that have changed the game for many sectors including tourism. In both revolutions, nations from Asia and the Pacific have emerged as leaders."

As estimated by UNWTO, 2030 will witness 1.8 billion international tourists travelling around the world. Of those, 535 million international travelers will visit Asia and the Pacific – a figure which almost doubles the current number of inbound travel to the region. In this framework of continuous growth, innovations brought to the tourism field by technological advances were identified during the Conference as opportunities to enhance the sector.

In this regard, UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai underlined that the priority areas of the Organization such as making travel safer and more seamless through processes such as the e-visa, improving the quality and competitiveness of destinations and businesses, can be materialized in a better manner through innovation and technology.

Additional topics such as the use of ICTs within the tourism sector,

consumer trends and new business models were also debated in the sessions. Mario Hardy, CEO of the *Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA)*, highlighted the new innovations that are changing the travel industry including crowdsourcing, the sharing economy, 3D printing and wearables, among others.

On the future impact of new technologies in the tourism sector, Yuri Furusawa, Vice-Commissioner of the Japan Tourism Agency, mentioned that “Technological progress is enabling people to travel more easily, and we now live in an era in which, each year, 1.2 billion people enjoy overseas trips. Travel encourages direct human and cultural exchange, creating a basis for people to learn more about the importance of each other’s cultures and lives, and to live in harmony. Technology has made an immeasurable contribution to such developments.”

Madrid, Spain, 10 June 2016
PR No. 16047

UNWTO Network of Observatories meets to discuss the measurement of sustainable tourism at destination level

Under the title ‘Advancing the Measurement of Sustainable Tourism Development’, UNWTO Member States, NGOs, academic institutions and other public and private sector entities discussed approaches to effectively measure, monitor and assess tourism performance and impacts at destination level. This consultative process takes place at a time in which the international tourism community embraces the Sustainable Development Goals.

UNWTO welcomed more than 70 experts from 21 countries at its Headquarters in Madrid, to discuss and share experiences related to the measurement and monitoring of the impact that tourism has on destinations. Special focus was put on the relevance and the opportunities available from non-traditional data sources, including social media analysis, geospatial data mapping, big and live data collection and usage, as well as the analysis of credit card spending patterns and the flow of visitors based on mobile device information.

This consultation takes place in the context of recent achievements that underline and strengthen the role and responsibilities of sustainable tourism as a positive instrument for development such as the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals as well as the upcoming International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017. The two days meeting included presentations and discussions covering among others the processes of measuring sustainable tourism at the local level, common challenges and needs and the chances deriving from different data sources.

Participants stressed the need for more evidence-based decision making

as well as regular and timely measurement approaches to support responsible policy-making and management of tourism at the local level.

UNWTO has been promoting the use of sustainable tourism indicators for measurement since the early 1990s as essential instruments for effective tourism policy planning and management at destinations.

In this framework, the UNWTO Network of Observatories (INSTO) was created in 2004. The Network encompasses destinations around the world committed to regular monitoring of tourism in order to better understand destination-wide resource use and foster the responsible management of tourism.

Madrid, Spain, 13 June 2016

UNWTO strongly condemns the attack in Orlando

UNWTO is deeply shocked by the tragic attack perpetrated in Orlando, USA. On the behalf of the international tourism community, UNWTO expresses its heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of the victims, to the American people and the LGBT community worldwide in this difficult moment.

“On the behalf of the international tourism community, UNWTO conveys its heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of the victims and expresses its full solidarity with the people and the Government of United States of America” said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai. “This hideous crime reminds us once again we are facing a global threat and that we need to more than ever stay together, strengthen our cooperation and continue to fight prejudice” he added.

Madrid, Spain, 14 June 2016

PR No. 16048

UNWTO and Astana EXPO 2017 partner to promote sustainable tourism

Astana EXPO 2017 National Company and UNWTO will work together to promote sustainable tourism at the international exhibition which will be held in Astana in 2017 under the theme ‘Future Energy’. The partnership was signed on 13 June at UNWTO Headquarters in Madrid by UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai and Akhmetzhan Yessimov, Chairman of Board for Astana EXPO 2017 National Company.

Besides supporting the international visibility of the Fair which will take place in Astana next year, the Memorandum of Understanding undersigned between both parties includes the dissemination of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017 and the

promotion of energy efficiency in tourism and of the UNWTO Silk Road initiative.

“This is an excellent opportunity to highlight the role that the tourism sector has in advancing a greener future,” said UNWTO Secretary-General in the signature of the agreement.

“Kazakhstan is rich in energy resources but we need to look into the future and protect our environment, and the future is renewable energies”, said Mr. Yessimov.

Specific areas of cooperation in the MoU include the promotion of the Hotel Energy Solution initiative among hotels in Kazakhstan and the organization of a Conference on Tourism and Future Energy in June 2017.

In addition, a Train the Trainers initiative will be conducted during the Astana Expo to enhance the capacities of tour operators based along the Silk Road.

Madrid, Spain, 15 June 2016
PR No. 16049

UNWTO and the Government of The Netherlands partner to foster religious tourism

To promote the role of religious tourism as an agent for cultural preservation, peace and understanding is the focus of the agreement undersigned by UNWTO and the Government of The Netherlands. The partnership includes the celebration of a conference on ‘Religious Heritage and Tourism: How to increase religious heritage tourism in a changing society’ that will be held on October 2016, in Utrecht, The Netherlands.

The agreement was signed by UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai, and the Ambassador of The Netherlands to Spain, Matthijs Van Bonzel at UNWTO Headquarters, coinciding with the European Ambassadors lunch held annually at the premises of the Organization.

UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai said “religious tourism is a powerful instrument to raise awareness of our common responsibility in safeguarding this lasting heritage and a key agent of peace, fostering tolerance and understanding between visitors and host communities, in an amalgam of different faiths.”

On behalf of the Government of The Netherlands, Ambassador Matthijs Van Bonzel, said that “the Agreement and the cooperation with UNWTO within the theme of religious heritage and tourism form an outstanding chance to profile this fragile heritage internationally as an economic strength and chance”

Organized by the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of The Netherlands jointly with the Museum Catharijneconvent, the Conference on Religious Heritage and Tourism will

count with the support of the Centre for Religious Art and Culture (Flanders) and Future for Religious Heritage. The event will take place with occasion of the Dutch Future of Religious Heritage Program.

“The Netherlands is an excellent example of a country which always looks into the future, searching for innovative approaches to strengthen its tourism. Utrecht, a city which is a true expression of the cultural richness, religious heritage and diversity of The Netherlands, is the perfect place to organize such an event.” added UNWTO Secretary-General at the signing ceremony.

Madrid, Spain, 16 June 2016
PR No. 16050

UNWTO and the World Committee on Tourism Ethics launch the UNWTO Ethics Award

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE) have launched the UNWTO Ethics Award. The Award will recognize companies committed to making their business more responsible and sustainable through the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

The UNWTO Ethics Award, geared to recognize the engagement of tourism enterprises in promoting and implementing the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, is open to all tourism companies and trade associations that are official signatories of the Private Sector Commitment to the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

As the organ responsible for the promotion and monitoring of the implementation of the Code, the World Committee on Tourism Ethics conceived this initiative to promote the positive initiatives steaming from the growing number of companies and trade associations that have adhered to the Private Sector Commitment to the Code. As of June 2016, a total of 463 signatories from 64 countries have committed to promote and implement the Code.

According to the Committee “in these times of needed awareness and common action we should praised those entrepreneurs worldwide who contribute to responsible and sustainable tourism through their Corporate Social Responsibility”.

The candidatures will have to demonstrate to be long-lasting and have a positive impact in at least two of the following areas: (a) Corporate governance and business ethics; (b) Employment quality; (c) Social Equity and Human Rights; (d) Community Well-Being; and (e) Environmental sustainability.

The winner of the first UNWTO Ethics Award will be announced on 18 January 2017 during the 13th UNWTO Awards ceremony and gala dinner organized in collaboration with the International Tourism Trade Fair

(IFEMA/FITUR) in Madrid, Spain. The prize will be conferred by a representative of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, which will act as the Jury of the Award.

Candidacies are open until 30 September 2016.

Madrid, Spain, 22 June 2016
PR No. 16051

UNWTO to support Ukraine's tourism development

UNWTO will work with the Government of Ukraine to support the development of its tourism sector. The cooperation will focus on the areas of tourism statistics, communications and capacity building within the Organization for tourism officials and graduates from the country's tourism educational institutions. The initiatives were discussed between UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai and Vice-Prime Minister for Euro-Integration and Euro-Atlantic Integration Ivanna Klympush-Tsyntsadze at the sidelines of the Conference on 'Destination Branding - keys to building a successful reputation', organized by the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine in collaboration with UNWTO.

The Conference discussed the impact of technology on destination branding as well as the evolving roles of National Tourism Organizations (NTOs) and Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) in destination branding, in view of current technological and consumer changes. The Conference was preceded by a UNWTO Masterclass on Tourism Destination Branding, which brought together representatives from the various regions of Ukraine.

"Tourism is one of the best areas of investment and income generation," said Ms Klympush-Tsyntsadze, opening the event.

Ms. Yuliya Klymenko, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade, presented the ten issues the Government will look to address in developing Ukraine's tourism sector, including the review of legislation, public/private sector partnerships, the creation of a network of regional tourism brands, improving statistics and the liberalization of visa regimes.

During the Conference, Ukraine announced the implementation of visa-upon-arrival measures for Chinese tourists, complementing similar visa facilitation initiatives taken earlier this year for visitors from Australia and New Zealand.

"UNWTO has long been advocating for travel facilitation as a means to promote economic growth through tourism. We welcome very much the decision of the Government of Ukraine to concede visa upon arrival to Chinese tourists, as this is an example of its vision and commitment to tourism development," said Mr. Rifai. "China is the world's top source market, with US\$ 292 billion spent on travelling abroad last year, and we

trust this measure will yield significant benefits to the economy of Ukraine,” he added.

Madrid, Spain, 28 June 2016
PR No. 16052

Quality Management key for the competitiveness of tourism destinations

Quality management indicators and processes are key tools for the competitiveness of tourism destinations concluded the UNWTO Conference on Quality Management held last week in Bucharest, Romania.

In that regard, participants to the conference called for an integrated approach to quality management as a priority in long-term strategic planning of Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) at national and sub-national levels.

An integrated quality management approach to destination management contributes to improving the image of the destination, enhances the legislative framework and minimizes operational challenges.

“We live in an increasingly competitive sector. Quality standards provide a framework to guide stakeholders to improve their operations and services along the whole tourism value chain so as to create a complete and positive tourism experience” said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai.

Costin Grigore Borc, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, Commerce and Relations with the Business Environment of Romania said “the dynamic changes in the global tourism market require qualitative transformation of nearly every tourism segment within a destination. For tourism destinations to survive, trends that relate to a continuous improvement of the tourism supply quality need to be intensely tracked.”

“Tourism, multi-sectorial by nature, was and still is vulnerable to market turbulence and economic crises. However, it was able to withstand the global economic crisis more than most other sectors, to relaunch as few sectors have been able to, and to quickly recover from periods of temporary weakness” remarked Anca Pavel-Nedea, President of the National Tourism Authority of Romania at the opening of the conference.

The Conference focused on ‘destination quality’ as a step beyond ‘product/service quality’, and provided a showcase for sharing initiatives and good practices in quality management in coastal destinations, protected areas, spa/wellness destinations, urban destinations and cultural heritage destinations.

The 103rd UNWTO Executive Council Meeting held in Málaga last May approved the following definition of Quality of a Tourism Destination, as

proposed by UNWTO's Committee on Tourism and Competitiveness: "Quality of a Tourism Destination is the result of a process which implies the satisfaction of all tourism product and service needs, requirements and expectations of the consumer at an acceptable price, in conformity with mutually accepted contractual conditions and the implicit underlying factors such as safety and security, hygiene, accessibility, communication, infrastructure and public amenities and services. It also involves aspects of ethics, transparency and respect towards the human, natural and cultural environment".

Madrid, Spain, 4 July 2016
PR No. 16053

UNWTO/ETC Roundtable discusses wellness and medical tourism

The Roundtable 'Exploring Health Tourism' gathered a group of international experts in Budapest, Hungary, to better understand and explore the growing segment of wellness and medical tourism. The meeting was convened by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the European Travel Commission (ETC), as part of their joint research programme, with the support of the Hungarian Tourism Agency.

The two-day event held in Budapest gathered experts from the World Health Organization (WHO), the European Union (EU), the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the European Spas Association, the Global Wellness Institute and Spaincares among others. Representatives from the health-related tourism sector from Hungary, Lithuania, Malaysia and Mexico attended the event.

Gusztáv Bienenrth, Hungarian Commissioner for Tourism, highlighted the importance of health-related tourism in Hungary's tourism sector, as well as the role of the country in the global market of health tourism, while underlining the relevance of the event.

Discussions were based on the ongoing ETC and UNWTO research on health tourism, a complex and not yet well-defined segment. This report is the first attempt to set a coherent conceptualization of health tourism and define the motivations behind travelers looking for health-related services.

"The need to better understand an emerging, global, complex and rapidly changing phenomenon such as wellness and medical tourism has become essential to tap into its growth potential", said Márcio Favilla, UNWTO Executive Director for Operational Programmes and Institutional Relations.

"For ETC and UNWTO it is very important that we provide tourism authorities, managers and experts with a better understanding of the health tourism phenomenon and jointly cooperate to identify and provide

a consistent terminology that lays the foundations for this promising sector”, said Eduardo Santander, Executive Director of ETC.

Participants debated the taxonomy proposed in the research to agree on a consistent terminology to define and describe the system of travelling for health purposes. Furthermore, the Roundtable explored the latest trends shaping health tourism and how tourism destinations can tap into these opportunities.

The final report establishing common grounds for a health-related tourism taxonomy will be published by the end of 2016.

Madrid, Spain, 12 July 2016

PR No. 16054

UNWTO and partners launch an e-toolkit to help hotels reach zero-energy consumption

The nearly-Zero Energy Hotels (neZEH) *e*-toolkit, which is available online at: www.nezeh.eu assesses the energy performance of hotels and proposes measures to improve efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy sources towards nearly-zero consumption. The toolkit is the outcome of a three-year long project funded by the European Union.

The neZEH *e*-toolkit evaluates the energy performance of hotels through a questionnaire and identifies options for energy efficiency, including efficient use of non-renewable sources, while raising awareness on the topic through inspiring examples.

The project aims to support hotels in Europe to comply with nearly-Zero Energy Buildings (nZEB) regulations, which all EU Member States are required to meet by 2020. An nZEB-level building must demonstrate high levels of energy performance. The nearly-zero, or very low, amount of energy required should be generated to a very significant extent by renewable energy sources, including those produced onsite or nearby.

As stated by UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai, “this unprecedented initiative shows not only the concerns, but also the high level of commitment, of the tourism sector in addressing one of the worldwide preoccupations: climate change”.

Sixteen hotels across seven European countries (Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Romania, Spain and Sweden) participated in the project as pilot European neZEH Hotels. These are to become inspiring examples to the European hotel industry of how to implement best practices to achieve nearly zero energy level performance.

Preceding the launch of the *e*-toolkit, the policy implications of a zero-energy tourism sector in Europe were debated at the European Parliament on 17 March 2016. The event, addressed at regional, national and European policy makers, stressed the need to reduce legislative barriers

and introduce supporting measures to promote zero energy growth and ensure the sustainability and competitiveness of tourism in the EU.

The neZEH project is co-funded by the European Commission in the framework of the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme. It aims to accelerate the rate of large-scale renovations of hotels into nearly-Zero Energy Buildings (nZEB) by providing technical advice to hoteliers and demonstrating flagship nZEB projects in the European hospitality sector.

The neZEH partnership includes ten partners across seven European countries: the Technical University of Crete-Renewable and Sustainable Energy Systems Lab (Greece), the coordinating partner for the project, along with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the Network of European Region for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism (NECSTouR), Sustainable Innovation (Sweden), Creara Consultores S.L. (Spain), the Energy Institute Hrvoje Požar (Croatia), the Istituto Superiore sui Sistemi Territoriali per l'Innovazione (Italy), the Agency of Braşov for Energy Management and Environment Protection (Romania), the Federation of European Heating and Air-conditioning Associations (Netherlands), and ENERGIES 2050 (France).

Madrid, Spain, 14 July 2016
PR No. 16055

Tourism, a catalyst for peace and development

Tourism can play a key role in building peace and supporting reconciliation processes, concluded the UNWTO Conference on 'Tourism, a catalyst for development, peace and reconciliation' held in Passikudah, Sri Lanka between 11 and 14 July.

Community engagement and empowerment, capacity building and training, and public/private sector partnerships are key factors in advancing a culture of peace through tourism in post-conflict societies. Participants recalled the importance of placing tourism at the heart of the peace and reconciliation agenda, to ensure the sector can deliver on its capacity to generate development and social inclusion.

"Tourism is a vehicle for trust and goodwill. Cultural understanding can change attitudes and build peace. Tourism's role in peace building is also enacted through its contribution to poverty alleviation, cultural preservation and environmental conservation," said President of Sri Lanka Maithripala Sirisena in a message to the Conference.

"For most of the last thirty years, this place has been a warzone. Today, Passikudah is an example of how people affected by conflict have picked up the pieces and rebuilt their lives. We would not be meeting here if it were not for peace," said the Minister of Tourism Development and Christian Religious Affairs and Lands of Sri Lanka, John Amaratunga. "We will work to provide an example to the world on how to rise from the ashes of conflict to become a leading tourism destination," he added.

“We face a deficit of tolerance. Tourism brings people together; it opens our minds and hearts”, said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai, opening the Conference. “Yet to gain peace we need to give people opportunities for a better future; we need to create jobs and bring them hope,” he added.

“The Petra National Trust conducted a number of informal surveys that suggest that when tourism is poorly managed, societal tensions persist, local communities’ connection to their heritage weakens, responsible practices around tourism sites suffer, and local culture and values erode,” said HRH Princess Dana Firas, Chair of the Petra National Trust, Jordan, in her keynote address.

The Conference focused on four main topics: the contribution of tourism development to peace, local community involvement and ‘peace sensitive tourism’, public/private partnerships, and marketing in post-conflict destinations.

“This was an historical event in an area once torn apart by war. We trust that tourism development in Sri Lanka will bring more opportunities to the people and particularly the youth of the country,” said Paddy Withana, Chairman of Sri Lanka Tourism, closing the event by recalling that the conference welcomed perspectives on how that can be done in full respect of communities and traditions from across the country.

On the occasion, five Sri Lankan companies – Aitken Spence Hotel Holdings PLC, Lanka Hotels & Travels PVT Ltd, Laugfs Leisure Limited, Siddhalepa Ayurveda Health Resort and Theme Resorts & Spas Pvt Ltd. - signed the Private Sector Commitment to the UNWTO Code of Ethics for Tourism, pledging to upload and promote the values of the Code. The signing ceremony was witnessed by UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai, the Sri Lankan Minister of Tourism Development and Christian Religious Affairs and Lands of Sri Lanka, John Amaratunga, and Hiran Cooray, Member of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics.

Madrid, Spain, 15 July 2016

UNWTO strongly condemns attack in Nice, France

UNWTO is deeply shocked by the hideous attack perpetrated in Nice. On behalf of the international tourism community, UNWTO expresses its heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of the victims and to the French people in this difficult moment.

“On behalf of the international tourism community, UNWTO conveys its heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of the victims and expresses its full solidarity with the people and the Government of France” said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai. “Nice is, and will continue to be, one of the leading tourism destinations in France and in the world. In the face of these forces of darkness, we must more than ever remain united to fight this global threat” he added.

International tourism continues to grow above average in the first four months of 2016

2016 started on a strong note for international tourism. International tourist arrivals grew by 5% between January and April 2016 according to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer. Results were robust across almost all subregions and many destinations reported double-digit growth. Prospects for May-August remain positive, with around 500 million tourists expected to travel abroad in the Northern Hemisphere summer holiday peak season.

Destinations worldwide received 348 million international tourists (overnight visitors) between January and April 2016, some 18 million more than the same period last year (+5.3%). This follows an increase of 4.6% in 2015, and could make 2016 the seventh consecutive year of above-average growth, with international arrivals increasing by 4% or more every year following the crisis in 2009.

“Results show a strong desire to travel and this continues to drive tourism growth. Destinations keep benefitting from solid demand across all world regions despite ongoing challenges, showing that tourism is a dynamic and resilient economic sector,” said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai.

“Yet, despite these good results, the tragic events of recent months remind us that safety and security remain a major challenge for all. We must continue to work closely together to address this global threat and ensure tourism is an integral part of emergency planning and response at global, regional and national level” added Mr. Rifai.

By region, Asia and the Pacific (+9%) recorded the highest increase in international arrivals, with all Asian subregions enjoying growth of 7% or above. By subregion, Subsaharan Africa (+13%) led growth, strongly rebounding from previous years’ modest results.

UNWTO forecasts international tourist arrivals to increase by 3.5% to 4.5% over the full year 2016, in line with UNWTO’s long-term projection of 3.8% growth a year for the period 2010 to 2020.

Results by region

Asia and the Pacific (+9%) recorded the highest growth in international arrivals across world regions in January-April 2016, with robust results in all four subregions. South-East Asia and Oceania both achieved 10% growth, while arrivals in North-East Asia increased by 8% and in South Asia by 7%.

In Africa (+7%), international tourist arrivals experienced a clear rebound in Subsaharan Africa (+13%), while in North Africa results were down by 8%.

In the Americas (+6%), all four subregions continued to enjoy significant growth in the first four months of 2016, led by Central America and South America (both at +7%). Arrivals in the Caribbean (+6%) and North America (+5%) were fuelled by continued strong outbound demand from the United States, where tourism expenditure increased by 9% through May.

Europe (+4%), the world's most visited region, consolidated its healthy growth of recent years with Northern Europe and Central and Eastern Europe (both at +6%) in the lead, followed by Southern and Mediterranean Europe (+4%) and Western Europe (+3%).

International tourist arrivals in the Middle East are estimated to have declined by 7% through April according to available information.

Results for both Africa and the Middle East should be read with caution, as they are based on currently limited data available for these regions.

Prospects remain positive

UNWTO estimates that some 500 million tourists will travel internationally between May and August 2016, the Northern Hemisphere summer holiday peak season, accounting for about 41% of the year's total international tourist arrivals.

According to the UNWTO Tourism Confidence Index, prospects for May-August 2016 remain positive and in line with the performance of January-April. The Index shows confidence is highest in Europe, followed by the Americas.

On the positive side, Brazil is looking forward to the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro in August. A downside is that security concerns remain high on the agenda. Furthermore, the United Kingdom's vote to leave the European Union in the recent referendum ('Brexit') has raised uncertainty in the market and led to a substantial depreciation of the UK pound Sterling. However, UNWTO does not expect this to have a significant impact on international travel in the short term.

Note: Results reflect preliminary data reported to date and are subject to revision.

Madrid, Spain, 09 August 2016
PR No. 16056

UNWTO welcomes Indonesia's cutting edge tourism visa policy

UNWTO has expressed its full support to the decision of the Government of Indonesia to grant free visa to citizens from 169 countries. The measure looks for attracting international tourism to the country by simplifying travel procedures and follows research by UNWTO and WTTC that shows that visa facilitation in the ASEAN economies could create between 333,000 to 654,000 new jobs in a period of three years.

The visa-free policy is valid for a maximum stay of 30 days, has no restriction on the number of visits per year, and is non-extendable nor convertible to any other stay permit. Nationals of visa-free countries can enter Indonesia in any of the 124 immigration check points that the country possesses.

“Indonesia is setting an example to the world. UNWTO welcomes the decision of the Government of Indonesia which clearly reflects the commitment of the country with the development of the tourism sector as a driver of economic growth, jobs and well-being for its people” said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai.

UNWTO has been extensively advocating for the benefits of safe, secure and seamless travel as a means to promote tourism development and multiply socio-economic benefits of the sector.

According to the UNWTO/WTTC Report Impact of Visa Facilitation in ASEAN Member States, ASEAN stands to gain 6 to 10 million additional international tourist arrivals from improved visa facilitation. The additional receipts generated by these tourists could reach between US\$7 and US\$12 billion.

Progress has been made at global level yet many opportunities remain for improvement, namely through maximizing the use of new technologies.

The 2015 UNWTO Visa Openness Report shows that the share of total tourists required to obtain a traditional visa prior to travelling continues to decline and is at its lowest level ever. In 2015, 39% of the world population could travel for tourism without obtaining a traditional visa prior to departure as compared to only 23% in 2008.

Madrid, Spain, 23 August 2016
PR No. 16059

UNWTO Wine Tourism Conference gathers experts from around the world

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), in collaboration with the Georgian National Tourism Administration, is organizing the 1st UNWTO Global Conference on Wine Tourism in the Kakheti wine region of Georgia on 7-9 September 2016.

“Georgia’s unique wine-making traditions date back 8,000 years and are considered by UNESCO as intangible heritage, making the country an ideal host for the Global Conference on Wine Tourism. The country’s recent success in attracting a growing number of tourists, and its development of tourism products, branding and marketing, combine to present an excellent platform for sharing best practices, experience and knowledge,” said Dimitry Kumsishvili, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia.

“Wine tourism is a growing segment with immense opportunities to

diversify demand. In the case of Georgia, the segment's potential is well known and we are very pleased to be holding the first UNWTO Global Conference on Wine Tourism in the country", added Taleb Rifai, UNWTO Secretary-General.

Gastronomy and wine have become key components of a culture and lifestyle experience of any destination, and a growing travel motivation. To foster the development of this segment, in September 2015 UNWTO launched the UNWTO Gastronomy Network.

In this context, UNWTO is currently developing a Wine Tourism Prototype in Spain. The Prototype includes an analysis of wine tourism, in comparison with other tourism segments, and the design of an innovative product development model focused on the integration of the wineries into the cultural, economic, social and environmental heritage of their area of influence. The final results of this project will be presented at the conference.

The Conference will have a unique and dynamic format with three sessions to be held in different wineries across the Georgian region of Kakheti.

Speakers at the conference will include: Mr. Giovanni Mantovani, CEO, VeronaFiere and creator of VINITALY, (Italy); Ms. Janet Dorozynski, Trade Commissioner, Canadian Wine, Beer and Spirits and Tourism, Trade Sectors Bureau (BBI), Global Affairs Canada (Canada); Mr. Mike Veseth, Wine Economist, Professor Emeritus of International Political Economy, University of Puget Sound (United States); Mr. Gabriel Fidel, Wine Tourism Consultant (Argentina); Ms. Ayana Mizawa, Chief winemaker, Chuo Budoshu Co., Ltd., Grace Wine (Japan); Mr. Pedro Vargas, International Projects Director, Leading Brands of Spain Forum (Spain); Mr. George Chogovadze, Head of Georgian National Tourism Administration (Georgia); Mr. Levan Davitashvili, Deputy Minister of Agriculture of Georgia (Georgia); Mr. Patrick Honnef, Winemaker, Viticulturist, CEO of Château Mukhrani, Georgia (Georgia); Mr. John H Wurdeman V, Owner of Pheasant's Tears (Georgia); Mr. Santiago Vivanco, Director, Vivanco Museum of Wine Culture (Spain); Mr. Donald Hawkins, Eisenhower Professor, George Washington University (United States); Ms. Paula Sousa, Marketing & Tourism Sales Director, Quinta Nova N. S. Carmo (Portugal) and Ms. Zaida Semprun, Wine Tourism Commercial Manager, Freixenet Group (Spain).

Madrid, Spain, 7 August 2016
PR No. 16060

Indonesia Sustainable Tourism Observatories join the UNWTO Network

Indonesia has joined the UNWTO International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO) with the opening of three sustainable

tourism observatories, as announced at the PATA Travel Mart 2016 in Jakarta, which position Indonesia as a regional hub for sustainable tourism practices.

The observatories, located in the regions of Sesaot, Senggigi Lombok Barat, Pangandaran and Sleman, will be hosted by the Bandung Institute of Technology, Gadjah Mada University and the Mataram University. The newly created bodies will monitor and ensure sustainable practices of the tourism sector in these regions. They will be looking for examples of evidence-based decision making and timely measurement and management of resources and activities, each indispensable factors of sustainable tourism development.

Together with the opening of the three observatories, Indonesia has endorsed 20 regions to test pilot sustainable tourism projects and chosen ten priority destinations for the projects. "The more we preserve, the more prosperous we become," said Arief Yahya, Minister of Tourism of Indonesia. "These observatories will contribute to Indonesia's sustainable practices in other fields," he added.

UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai welcomed Indonesia's strong commitment to sustainable tourism: "Institutional support is essential to ensure the sustainable development of the tourism sector and Indonesia is exemplary in coordinating all stakeholders to make these observatories a reality."

The establishment of the three observatories in Indonesia is timely, coming only a few months before the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development is launched in January 2017. During the celebrations the observatories will be prominently featured as crucial elements for ensuring the sustainable development of the tourism sector.

INSTO provides a framework for the regular gathering, analysis and communication of information on tourism's environmental, social and economic impacts in destinations. Currently, the Network includes a total of 14 observatories (eight in China, three in Indonesia, one in Greece, one in Mexico and one in Brazil).

Madrid, Spain, 08 September 2016
PR No. 16061

Tourism contribution to sustainable development addressed at the Bled Strategic Forum in Slovenia

"Safety, security, international cooperation and peace are key factors to ensure the sustainable development of the tourism sector," said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai, at the Bled Strategic Forum, an annual meeting held in Slovenia. The occasion provided with the opportunity to present the UNWTO/World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) Open Letter on Travel and Tourism to Miro Cerrar, the Prime Minister of Slovenia.

The UNWTO/WTTC Open Letter calls on heads of state and government around the world to acknowledge tourism's key role in delivering more sustained and balanced growth and prioritize the sector higher in national policies in order to maximize its potential. In the presentation of the Letter, UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai and Gerald Lawless, Chairman of the WTTC, discussed the key factors affecting tourism development with the Slovenian Prime Minister.

"A major issue we face in our sector is that tourism is still underestimated by some leaders, particularly in its potential for job creation. My recommendation is to always include tourism in the policy agenda and consider travel facilitation as a key issue," said UNWTO Secretary-General in the meeting with the Prime Minister.

The potential of Slovenia as a touristic destination guided the discussion and as Gerald Lawless, Chairman of WTTC, said: "Slovenia is a beautiful tourist destination. Currently, the Travel & Tourism sector contributes EUR4.9 billion to the Slovenian economy, which is 13% of the country's GDP and supports over 13% of total employment. The Slovenian government and its people will see great further benefits from the commitment to the sustainable development of Travel & Tourism as investment in the sector will lead to higher visitor numbers and expenditure, and increased employment opportunities throughout the country".

The contribution of tourism to the Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was widely discussed in the Bled Forum. As UNWTO Secretary General stated, "it is very clear that security cannot exist without sustainability and vice versa. Indeed, tourism has never been more of an essential component of sustainable growth and stability".

"Slovenia has become synonymous with sustainability and has also recognised the importance of cooperation in achieving sustainability and security – he mentioned - and UNWTO is convinced that in the present challenging times only by working together current concerns can be overcome and a better future is possible."

Over the last years, the Bled Strategic Forum, has become a major incubator to debate current issues on development. In its 2016 edition the Summit has tackled tourism as a key driver for growth, job creation and environmental protection.

On the occasion, seven Slovenian companies signed the Private Sector Commitment to the Global Code of Ethics of Tourism expressing their engagement with sustainable tourism practices.

Wine Tourism – a growing tourism segment

The link between wine tourism and culture, history and lifestyle and the contribution of this segment to the development of the sector has been widely discussed during the 1st UNWTO Global Conference on Wine Tourism held in the Kahketi region in Georgia. During two days (7-9 September) the event convened over 200 participants including policy makers and tourism experts from nearly 50 countries.

In the last decade, wine tourism has become a key component of gastronomy tourism and a pillar in the strategies of diversification of many destinations. The event was a unique opportunity to discover the richness of local Georgian culture and to exchange innovative ideas to promote wine tourism between destinations already experienced in wine tourism with others with a high potential in that segment. Ministries, Destination Management Organizations (DMOS) and National Tourism Organizations (NTOs), universities, tour operators and wine professionals were among the participants.

“Wine tourism is intimately related to the identity of destinations and comprises cultural, economic and historical values. Furthermore, it constitutes a major driver in diversification strategies helping destinations to enrich the touristic offer and to attract different publics. This Conference tries not only to emphasize these but also to promote exchanges and to build cooperation among destinations with a potential in this field,” said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai at the opening of the Conference.

“The Conference highlights one of the most cherished and eldest traditions of our culture. Wine and wine-making is an integral part of our history and identity, and has become the key element in the nation’s brand image. With this, the opportunity to host the 1st UNWTO Global Conference on Wine Tourism has once again placed Georgia in the hearts of the world’s wine experts, professionals and enthusiasts,” said Dimitry Kumsishvili, First Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia:

Particular interest was raised by the presentation of the UNWTO Wine Tourism Prototype, a tool developed by the Organization that introduces an innovative methodology to evaluate the impact of wineries to the cultural, economic, social and environmental frameworks. As Yolanda Perdomo from the UNWTO Affiliate Member Programme explained “this methodological tool that can be adapted and replicated in different regions will help destinations to be promoted through their oenological framework that will also help emphasize other aspects such as culture, history and tradition.”

As an outcome of the Conference, the Georgia Declaration on Wine

Tourism identifies a number of recommendations to facilitate the development of wine tourism that would help destinations to implement key actions.

“Wine tourism is a growing segment in continuous update that offers an extraordinary diversity to the consumer as well as business opportunities to producers,” said Gustavo Santos, Minister of Tourism of Argentina where the next Wine Tourism Conference will be held in 2017 (Mendoza province, second week of November).

Madrid, Spain, 20 September 2016
PR No. 16064

Accessible Tourism, theme of World Tourism Day 2016

Tourism for all: people with disabilities, senior citizens and families travelling with small children, and sooner or later all citizens will appreciate the advantages of universal accessibility. This is why UNWTO has chosen to celebrate World Tourism Day 2016 on the theme of accessible tourism. Official celebrations will take place on 27 September in Bangkok, Thailand.

For the last quarter-century World Tourism Day, held annually on 27 September, has aimed to foster awareness of the importance of tourism and its social, cultural, political and economic impact. This year's official celebrations will be held in Bangkok, Thailand on the theme of 'Tourism for All – Promoting Universal Accessibility'.

Reaching universal accessibility in tourism is a shared responsibility of all parties involved in the tourism value chain, as well as a business opportunity for companies and destinations.

“Everyone has the right to access leisure and tourism services on an equal basis. Yet 1 billion people around the world living with disability, along with young children, seniors and persons with other access requirements, still face obstacles in accessing fundamentals of travel such as clear and reliable information, efficient transportation and public services, and a physical environment that is easy to navigate. Even with modern technologies, those with visual, hearing, mobility or cognitive impairments are being left behind in many tourism destinations.” said United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon in his official message.

“All of the world's citizens have the right to experience the incredible diversity this planet has to offer. Therefore, it is highly important that all countries and destinations, as well as the industry, promote accessibility for all in the physical environment, in transport systems, in public facilities and services and in information and communications channels”, said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai.

“This year's theme, 'Tourism for All – Promoting Universal Accessibility', is a challenge for Thailand and the world to recognize the necessity of

accessibility in tourism and to accommodate everyone anywhere they may travel to (...) We have to understand the theory of Universal Design (...) As the world of travel and tourism is an expanding industry and the number of travelers increases every year, we have to ensure that travelling the world has to be as safe and seamless as possible,” explained Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul, Minister of Tourism and Sports of Thailand.

The official celebrations include a ‘Tourism and the Media’ session held on 26th September at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, and a full-day conference the following day. During the event, experts on accessibility and tourism will exchange views and best practices, addressing the need to work in cooperation to advance in the ‘Tourism for All’ agenda.

Creating an adequate policy framework for specific business development strategies, the need to increase awareness and capacity building targeting both decision makers and tourism professionals are some of the topics to be addressed during the conference. Andrew Stevens, Asia Pacific Editor of CNNMoney, will moderate this discussion.

The conference will also address innovative strategies in the development of accessible tourism infrastructure, products and services which add value to destinations and enhance their competitiveness on the global tourism market. A number of best practices will be featured with the aim of emphasizing the value of investing in accessibility.

The celebrations of World Tourism Day 2016 are being held in collaboration with CNN, UNWTO media partner.

Madrid, Spain, 27 September 2016

PR No. 16065

UNWTO calls for support to crisis-hit countries

UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai called for increased cooperation between tourism source markets and destinations that have been affected by crises. Addressing the 20th Summit of the Federal Association of the German Tourism Industry (BTW) on 26 September in Berlin, Germany on the topic of ‘Safe, Secure and Seamless Travel’, Rifai said: “real crises are often magnified or distorted by crises of perception. We need to enhance our support to countries affected by crises as they recover and help them increase their resilience. Supporting these countries will benefit the whole tourism sector and the whole of society.”

Attending the Summit was Chancellor Angela Merkel, who stressed the opportunities that sustainable tourism provides for developing and emerging countries. “It is important for the tourism sector to emphasize local culture and local products and services, to generate truly genuine development opportunities,” said the Chancellor. Ms. Merkel highlighted the role of tourism in development assistance. “Many refugees come from

African countries. We need to give people economic development perspectives in their home countries. Tourism could contribute significantly to this,” she said.

Speaking about the need to build a framework of safe, secure and seamless travel, Mr Rifai said: “Safety and security is one of the global challenges our world is experiencing. No country is immune to security risks. Not one. It is a global responsibility that we must face together, across sectors and borders.” He called for increased cooperation, saying: “Let us respond not with isolation but with unity. We must be vigilant to ensure that cooperation prevails over isolation and that safe and seamless travel can go hand in hand”.

“A condition of tourism’s success is positive cooperation – between visitor and host, between source market and destination, and also between the tourism and security sectors. For this reason I call for the mainstreaming of tourism into national, regional and global safety and security agendas. Effective coordination, information sharing and communication mechanisms between tourism and security will lead to safer and more seamless travel, as well as better crisis management,” he added.

The UNWTO Secretary-General also welcomed the launch of the Transcultural Dialogue in Tourism series, an initiative of BTW and the Centre for Innovation and Sustainability in Tourism (CITS). “By its very nature, a partnership between Germany and one host country, this will be a truly remarkable effort to harness that incredible power of tourism to build bridges of trust and tolerance. This supports the conviction that all people, no matter how diverse their background, can benefit economies and societies. Tourism is a leading sector in providing solutions and opportunities for inclusion, and intercultural dialogue is a way of finding these solutions,” said Mr Rifai.

“The facilitation of intercultural dialogue has always been part of the essence of our sector. In these times, this dialogue is more important than ever,” said Michel Frenzel, President of BTW.

Despite current challenges, Mr Rifai stressed that tourism is proving to be one of the most resilient economic sectors worldwide, creating jobs for millions and contributing to more inclusive growth. He recalled that in 2015, international tourist arrivals reached 1.186 million, 52 million more than in 2014, and that data for the first half of 2016 confirmed this positive trend with a 4% increase in international tourist arrivals.

Mr. Rifai also highlighted the good results of Germany’s tourism sector. Germany welcomed 35 million international tourists last year, 2 million more than in 2014, earning the country 33 billion euros in exports.

Madrid, Spain, 28 September 2016
PR No. 16066

Tourism Day 2016: Tourism leaders commit to advance Universal Accessibility

About 500 delegates from 60 countries have convened in Bangkok, Thailand, to take part in the Official Celebrations of the World Tourism Day this year dedicated to the theme 'Tourism for all: Promoting Universal Accessibility.' Policy frameworks, capacity building, business strategies and awareness raising have been some of the areas tackled during the week of events that commenced on the 26th September with a 'Tourism and the Media' Session.

During two days participants from 60 countries exchanged best practices and experiences on accessible tourism and have committed to advance universal accessibility in all components of the tourism value chain to ensure all citizens enjoy the benefits of travel, whatever their abilities may be.

"As one billion people across the globe have some kind of disability, accessibility becomes and will continue to be a major concern for us all" said Gen. Prayut Chan-o-Cha, Prime Minister of Thailand who presided over the Official Celebrations on 27 September. "We need to create more accessibility, for all including the ageing groups. We need to provide better services for all. This is also part of our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals" he added.

"We should not leave anyone behind. We believe we have to do more, understand better the needs of these groups. The World Tourism Day celebrations in Thailand have acted as a platform to sensitize us all about the importance of adapting the sector to the needs of all citizens and we should work in closer cooperation now to meet the demands of travelers worldwide" said Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul, Minister of Tourism and Sports of Thailand.

"People with disabilities, aged citizens, families with children and many more find obstacles when they travel. As tourism is a human right, the sector should advance to ensure that all citizens enjoy seamless travel in an equal manner," said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai in his message.

"Products and services aiming to increase the accessibility of travel add value to destinations and constitute an immense opportunity for the business sector" emphasized David Scowsill, President and CEO of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC).

"All of us have somebody who finds difficulties when travelling: family members, friends and colleagues, so we all are affected and can benefit from accessible travel measures" emphasized Mario Hardy, CEO at the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA).

A human right and a business opportunity

The first event of the week, the 'Tourism and the Media' workshop, held in cooperation with the Chulalongkorn University, served as a platform to discuss the role of the media in supporting Accessible Tourism.

"Journalists, editors, photographers, documentary producers...can do a lot in sensitizing the general public about Accessibility and by pushing their respective governments towards the necessary regulatory frameworks towards Universal Design in the tourism sector," explained Xu Jing, Regional Director of Asia and the Pacific at the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Together with the commitment of governments and the need to develop regulatory frameworks linked to accessibility-related measures, the World Tourism Day celebrations have served to emphasize the immense business opportunities that Universal Design can bring to the tourism sector.: "Sooner or later all of us will suffer circumstances that impede us moving freely and independently, so adapting Universal Accessibility principles will benefit us all" underlined Ivor Ambrose, Director of ENAT, the European Network of Accessible Tourism. He added that by 2050, as much as 22% of the world population will be over 60 years old and thus have specific access needs.

The first round table included the participation of the Secretary General of Thai Disabled Development Foundation, and former Minister of Tourism and Sports of Thailand, Weerasak Kowsurat, Monthien Boontan, Member of the Thai Senate and of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Benito C. Bengzon, Undersecretary of the Department of Tourism in the Philippines, Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism of the Cambodia, Mr. Walter Mzembi, Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry, Mr. Guy Didier Hypollite, Minister of Tourism and Creative Industries of Haiti and Mr. Dato Sri Mohamed Nazri bin Abdul Aziz, Minister of Tourism and Culture of Malaysia. Moderated by Andrew Steven, CNN anchor, the Session discussed the application of policy and regulatory frameworks aimed at achieving 'Tourism for All.'

The second debate, moderated by Anita Mendiratta, CNN Task Group, Lead Consultant, addressed the relevance of innovative strategies to foster accessible tourism infrastructure, products and services to enhance destination competitiveness. A number of best practices were featured by speakers such as Martin Heng, Accessible Travel Manager at Lonely Planet, Natthadej Suyadej, from Wheelchair Holidays Thailand, Hideto Kijima, President at the Japan Accessible Tourism Center, Svend Leirvaag, VP Industry Affairs at Amadeus IT Group and Sergio Guerreiro, Knowledge Management and Corporate Affairs at Turismo de Portugal.

Bangkok Declaration on Tourism for All

On the occasion of World Tourism Day 2016 participants adopted the Bangkok Declaration on Tourism for All, a document resulting from a consultation process involving governments, the private sector, civil society organizations and accessibility experts.

The Declaration calls upon all stakeholders to advance policies and business actions that promote universal accessibility, including training, awareness raising as well as considering Universal Design in all new tourism infrastructure and services and while adapting existing ones.

The celebrations of World Tourism Day 2016 were held in collaboration with CNN, UNWTO media partner.

World Tourism Day 2017 will be held in Qatar as decided by the 21st UNWTO General Assembly held in 2015 and will address the theme 'Sustainable Tourism – a Tool for Development', in line with the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

Madrid, Spain, 29 September 2016

PR No. 16067

International tourist arrivals up 4% in the first half of 2016

International tourist arrivals worldwide grew by 4% between January and June 2016 compared to the same period last year. Destinations worldwide received 561 million international tourists (overnight visitors), 21 million more than in 2015, according to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer.

Asia and the Pacific demonstrated renewed strength this first half of 2016, receiving 9% more international arrivals, the highest growth across world regions. In the Americas, international arrivals increased by 4%, led by Central America and South America. Europe (+3%) showed mixed results, with solid growth in many destinations offset by weaker performance in others. In Africa (+5%), Sub-Saharan destinations rebounded strongly, while North Africa continued to report weak results. Limited data for the Middle East points to an estimated decrease of 9% in international arrivals this six-month period, though results vary from destination to destination.

"Tourism has proven to be one of the most resilient economic sectors worldwide. It is creating jobs for millions, at a time when providing perspectives for a better future to people of all regions is one of our biggest challenges. But tourism is also creating bonds among people of all nations and backgrounds, bringing down stereotypes and fighting fear and distrust", said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai.

"Safety and security are key pillars of tourism development and we need to strengthen our common action to build a safe, secure and seamless travel framework. This is no time to build walls or point fingers; it is time to build an alliance based on a shared vision and a joint responsibility." he added.

Regional Results

Growth accelerated in Asia and the Pacific with international arrivals up 9% through June, driven by robust intraregional demand. Oceania (+10%)

led growth, followed by North-East Asia, South-East Asia (both +9%) and South Asia (+7%).

International tourist arrivals to Europe grew by 3% between January and June 2016, with mixed results across destinations. Northern Europe and Central and Eastern Europe both recorded 5% more international arrivals. Though many destinations posted positive results, growth in both Western Europe (+1%) and Southern Mediterranean Europe (+2%) was slow.

International arrivals in the Americas were up 4% in the first half of the year, in line with the world average. Strong US outbound flows continued to benefit many destinations across the region. Central America and South America (both +6%) led growth, while arrivals in both the Caribbean and North America grew by 4%.

Comparatively limited data available for Africa points to a 5% increase in international arrivals, with Sub-Saharan Africa (+12%) recovering vigorously, but North Africa down by 9%. International arrivals in the Middle East decreased by an estimated 9%, with mixed results among destinations.

Positive prospects for the second half of the year

The first half of the year typically accounts for around 46% of the total international arrivals count of the year. For the remainder of 2016 prospects are positive overall. Countries that have already reported results till July or August show continued growth in the current Northern Hemisphere summer peak season. The UNWTO Panel of Experts evaluated the period May-August also favourably and remains confident about the September-December period, in line with the trend of the first half of the year. Confidence is highest in Africa, the Americas and Asia and the Pacific, while experts in Europe and the Middle East are somewhat more cautious.

Demand for travel abroad varies across source markets

China, the world's top source market, continued to report double-digit growth in expenditure on international travel (+20% in the first quarter of 2016), benefiting destinations in the region and beyond. The United States, the world's second largest market, increased expenditure on outbound travel by 8% through July, thanks to a strong currency. Third largest market, Germany, reported a 4% increase in expenditure through July. Other markets that showed robust demand for outbound travel in the first half of 2016 were Spain (+20%), Norway (+11%), Australia (+10%) and Japan (+6%). Meanwhile expenditure from the Russian Federation and Brazil continues to be weak, reflecting the economic constraints and depreciated currencies in both markets.

Madrid, Spain, 5 October 2016
PR No. 16068

Armenia hosts the 38th Plenary Session of the UNWTO Affiliate Members

The 38th Plenary Session of the UNWTO Affiliate Members took place in Yerevan, Armenia between 1 and 4 October. The meeting discussed the latest tourism trends, public-private collaboration and promoting good practices in the sector. The event was held in parallel with the 43rd UNWTO Affiliate Members Board meeting, which adopted the Affiliate Members 2017 Action Plan.

This year's session comprised debates on the key issues shaping the 2017 Action Plan: the future of tourism, cultural tourism, city tourism and the 2017 International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

"It is an honour to host the 38th Affiliate Members Plenary Session and to welcome all participants to Armenia. Armenia boasts an incredibly rich history and varied traditions and it is with great pride that we share them with visitors. The key to a peaceful future are these kinds of intercultural exchanges and dialogue, promoting understanding and friendship as well as public and private partnerships" underlined Mr. Garegin Melkonyan, First Deputy Minister of Economy of Armenia.

During the meeting, Affiliate Members shared information on their role, goals, new projects, challenges and expectations in the context of public-private collaboration and global tourism.

"This meeting is very significant as it is held at a crucial time in the development of tourism. The sector is dealing with numerous exogenous shocks, including seismic economic changes and terror, which have heightened uncertainty and invite serious consideration on possible solutions. Tourism has a pivotal role to play in tackling these global problems as one of the most inclusive and resilient sectors in the world," said Edmund Bartlett, Chairman of the Board of the Affiliate Members, Representative of Consolidated Tourism and Investment Consultants Limited (CTICO).

"We are very pleased to be meeting in Armenia. Armenia is one of many examples of great potential in tourism; it holds extraordinary natural assets and unique cultural diversity and traditions, and this immense potential has started to translate into strong tourism results," said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai.

The event also featured three inspirational lectures by recognized experts:

The Future of Tourism, by Professor Eduardo Fallos-Solá, Ulysses Foundation

Marketing Innovation in Tourism, by Professor Luiz Moutinho, DCU Business School, Dublin City University, Ireland

New Niches in Cultural Tourism: the Archaeoastronomical Context, by Dr. Clive Ruggles, University of Leicester, United Kingdom

The 500 UNWTO Affiliate Members represents the private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations and local tourism authorities.

Madrid, Spain, 10 October 2016
PR No. 16069

Ambassador of Greece presents credentials to World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

The Ambassador of Greece, Christodoulos J. Lazaris, has presented his credentials to the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Taleb Rifai, accrediting him as Permanent Representative of his country to UNWTO. UNWTO is the United Nations specialized agency for tourism and is based in Madrid, Spain.

During the meeting, Rifai expressed to Ambassador Lazaris the Organization's determination and commitment to continue strengthening its close relationship with Greece.

The prospects for tourism in Greece are positive as economic recovery continues and new air routes open from emerging source markets, particularly Russia and China, as well as from traditional source markets. Greece has shown sustained growth in international tourism in recent years with almost 24 million international tourist arrivals in 2015, a 7% increase compared to the previous year, generating nearly 16 billion US dollars in receipts.

Greece has been a Member State of the UNWTO since 1975.

Madrid, Spain, 13 October 2016
PR No. 16072

UNWTO deeply saddened by the effects of the hurricane Matthew

UNWTO is deeply saddened by the tragic effects brought by hurricane Matthew to a number of destinations in the Caribbean.

"On behalf of the international tourism community, UNWTO conveys in particular its heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of the victims in Haiti, The Bahamas and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, where Hurricane Mathew, described as the most powerful storm to hit the Caribbean in a decade, has taken the lives of so many innocent people" said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai.

Other countries in the Caribbean - Cuba, Dominica, Jamaica and Saint Lucia - have also been impacted by the storm suffering some level damage.

“UNWTO will work alongside the affected countries in all the necessary measures to support them and trust that as in previous occasion the people of these countries will show their resilience as life gets back to normal and they open for business” added Mr Rifai.

The Minister of Tourism of Jamaica, and Chairman of the Board of the UNWTO Affiliate Members, Edmund Bartlett, has manifested also his solidarity with the affected neighbouring countries and offered his support.

Madrid, Spain, 17 October 2016
PR No. 16073

Luxor hosts UNWTO 5th UNWTO Global Summit on City Tourism: Cities: Local Culture for Global Travellers

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt are organizing the 5th Global Summit on City Tourism: “Cities: Local Culture for Global Travellers” on 1-2 November 2016 in Luxor. During the summit, UNWTO will launch the Mayors for Tourism Initiative.

Tourism has become a central component of the economy, social life and geography of many cities in the world and is ideally positioned to seize the opportunities provided by urbanization. Yet many challenges are emerging, including the need to effectively manage the growth of tourism in many cities around the globe.

The 5th Global Summit on City Tourism: “Cities: Local Culture for Global Travellers” will discuss city tourism trends and debate themes such as sustainable development, spatial organization and rejuvenation, innovation in city tourism, cross-cultural behaviour, and new business models or the so-called ‘sharing economy’.

The development of clusters that engage public and private players from all sectors is central to the new paradigm of city tourism development, in which tourism needs to be a tool for social cohesion and cultural preservation, beyond its fundamental contribution to economic activity.

As part of the action plan of the UNWTO City Tourism Network, UNWTO will launch a new initiative gauged to gather mayors and decision makers in cities around tourism issues. The Mayors for Tourism Initiative aims to promote the important role of tourism as a driving force for socioeconomic development in cities, and place the sector as a priority in the urban agenda.

Mayors of world cities have been invited to share best practices in managing the challenges and opportunities that tourism presents to local administrations and to propose formulas to align their tourism-related policies with those of national governments.

The Summit will be preceded by the 104th Session of the UNWTO Executive Council, taking place in Luxor on 30 October-1 November 2016.

Madrid, Spain, 18 October 2016
PR No. 16074

Mongolia hosts the UNWTO Silk Road Conference on Nomadic Tourism and Sustainable Cities

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), together with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia and the World Cities Scientific Development Alliance (WCSDA), organized the International Silk Road Conference on Nomadic Tourism and Sustainable Cities in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on 13-15 October 2016.

The conference gathered Ministers and high-level officials from nine UNWTO Silk Road Member States, official representatives from Silk Road regions, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and UNWTO Affiliate Members to address the potential of nomadic and sustainable city tourism. The event, officially opened by the Chairman of the State Great Hural of Mongolia, Mr. Enkhbold Miyegombo, attracted over 350 delegates from 21 countries.

The Silk Road has become one of the most visited international travel routes. Despite such growth, an increase in visitation also brings challenges, such as the protection of the environment and the maintenance of necessary heritage standards. Bearing in mind the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and the upcoming International Year for Sustainable Development for Tourism 2017, participants discussed these challenges and the large potential of developing nomadic tourism trails and products.

"The sustainable growth of nomadic tourism requires a balance between tourism promotion, heritage management and respect for local communities. It requires the collective engagement and cooperation of Silk Road destinations, the private sector and the civil society. With these ingredients in place, we can produce responsible nomadic tourism products to diversify Silk Road tourism and achieve the adequate tourism development for the countries involved." said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai in opening the conference.

"Today we welcome, with our uttermost respect and pride, all delegates to the International Silk Road Conference on Nomadic Tourism and Sustainable Cities. We believe that the great and historic Silk Road will be revived as an exciting route full of travelers and adventurers, hereby becoming a symbol for mutual understanding and peace among nations in the new millennium." said the Minister of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia, Ms. Oyunkhorol Dulamsuren during the opening ceremony.

The Silk Road countries agreed that, while the Silk Road presents extensive opportunities, long-term success will depend upon increased collaboration in the three key areas identified in the Silk Road Action Plan: marketing and promotion, capacity building and destination management, and travel facilitation. UNWTO would like to thank Turkish Airlines for supporting this event.

Madrid, Spain, 19 October 2016
PR No. 16075

UNWTO partners with EBRD to debate tourism in the MENA region

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of Jordan are organizing a regional conference on 'Investing in Tourism for an Inclusive Future: Challenges and Opportunities'. The Conference will take place in the world heritage city of Petra, Jordan, on 26-27 October.

Under the patronage of Jordan's Prime Minister Hani Mulki, the conference will gather the ministers of tourism from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Montenegro, Palestine and Tunisia, alongside representatives from the private sector, investment funds, tourism companies and associations.

Moderated by CNN Money Emerging Markets Editor John Defterios, participants at the high level panel will discuss how tourism can promote inclusive development in the southern and eastern Mediterranean with a particular focus on human capital, energy efficiency and micro, small and medium-sized-enterprises.

The partnership between UNWTO and the EBRD aims at supporting inclusive and sustainable tourism, building on UNWTO's expertise in capacity building and the EBRD's longstanding financial support for the private sector.

Madrid, Spain, 20 October 2016
PR No. 16076

4th World Tourism Conference focuses on the 'tourists first' – improving the visitors experience

Malaysia, the second most visited destination in South East Asia, has hosted the 4th edition of the World Tourism Conference (WTC) jointly organized between the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and the Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC).

Under the theme 'Tourism Delights: Delivering the Unexpected', the Conference focused on strategies to enhance the visitors experience under the principle of "tourists first". The round tables on 'Tourism a Sunrise Industry?' and 'Tourism Experiences: Breaking New Grounds' debated tourism trends beyond 2030 as well as how to reinvent the sector with a customer-oriented focus.

"We have witnessed two revolutions: on technology and on travel. The confluence of these has resulted in a new traveller who is technology-

savvy, connected and informed who increasingly desires authentic, unique and valuable travel experiences and who is also more responsible and conscientious. Our sector needs to harness the emerging desire for 'positive-impact' tourism to contribute to a better world," said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai at the Opening of the Conference.

"A key element to advance tourism is creativity and innovation (...) in that regard, Malaysia has enhanced its tourism products by packaging "local community's daily life" into a touristic offer - the "homestay experience" - providing travelers the opportunity to immerse in the traditional village lifestyle and to interact with local hosts, as well as other initiatives such as Villagestay, Visit MyFelda and Visit MyLonghouse," explained the Minister of Tourism of Malaysia, YB Dato' Seri Mohamed Nazri bin Abdul Aziz.

Additional sessions were dedicated to the endless opportunities that tourism brings to communities, where the relevance of sustainable practices, rural and youth tourism were underlined.

Malaysia has recently presented the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) which has prioritized tourism as a catalyst for economic prosperity. Ecotourism, family-friendly destination, business tourism, and events, entertainment and sports have been emphasized within this strategy. With this Programme, Malaysia hopes to reach 36 million tourist arrivals by the year 2020. In 2015, Malaysia received 27.5 million international tourist arrivals.

Madrid, Spain, 21 October 2016
PR No. 16077

10th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook commences in Guilin, China

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) and the People's Government of Guilin of China celebrate between 20-22 October the 10th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook. The theme of this special 10th anniversary edition is 'Tourism 10:10 - Looking back to look forward'.

With the collaboration of the Polytechnic University of Hong-Kong, a UNWTO Affiliate Member, the Forum has become over the last 10 years a reference platform on global and regional tourism trends. Parallel to the 10th Edition of the Forum, the 5th Annual Conference of UNWTO Sustainable Tourism Observatories in China will take place also in Guilin on 20 and 21 October.

"Tourism is a strong contributor to poverty alleviation as recognized by the Sustainable Development Goals and to be here in Guilin is the perfect occasion to remind that the Government of the People's Republic of China has prioritized this sector as a tool to lift 17% of the country's

impoverished population out of poverty by 2020,” said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai.

Tourism trends, changes in travel behavior and booking patterns and sustainable-related practices applied to the sector were some of the themes addressed throughout the Forum. The inclusive angle of tourism, a topic widely advocated by UNWTO, was also part of the discussions that addressed the participation of women in rural community tourism.

In 2015, Asia and the Pacific received 278 million tourists (+5% than in 2014) and will reach 535 million by 2030. International tourism generates xx billion USD in exports in Asia and the Pacific. As UNWTO elaborates in ‘Tourism 2030, A Global Overview,’ international tourist arrivals will reach 1.8 billion by 2030. By that time, Asia and the Pacific will gain most of the new arrivals. China is also a leading tourism destination – 4th in the world after France, USA and Spain with 57 million tourists in 2015.

The South East Asian region was the fastest growing in terms of international tourist arrivals in the first six months of 2016 with a growth rate of 9%, well above the global 4% increase registered in the world.

Madrid, Spain, 27 October 2016
PR No. 16079

UNWTO and EBRD strengthen sustainable tourism in the SEMED region

The tourism sector in the southern and eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) region has huge potential to become a major player in the economy and contribute to job creation. However, challenges remain.

In order to address issues facing the development of tourism in the SEMED region the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of Jordan held a two-day conference in Petra, titled ‘Investing in Tourism for an Inclusive Future: Challenges and Opportunities’.

Held under the patronage of Hani Mulki, the Prime Minister of Jordan, the conference brought together participants from the public and private sectors to discuss the role of tourism in creating job opportunities, promoting energy efficiency and strengthening micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

Participants discussed the importance of access to training and appropriate skills to create employment opportunities for young people and women, and explored how to reduce skills mismatches. Compliance with international standards for hospitality, services, food quality and safety, as well as environmental and labour regulations, are vital for the competitiveness of the sector and its development, the conference noted.

Enhancing resource and energy efficiency by implementing and

promoting sound policies and improving building standards was another focus of discussion, along with the role of financial institutions and investors as drivers of sustainable tourism.

In addition, participants considered how to strengthen the role and competitiveness of MSMEs in the tourism value chain. Sectors such as transport, handicrafts, hospitality, gastronomy, furniture and electronic appliances are interlinked with the tourism sector and can benefit significantly from its development. Yet, maximising the potential of tourism requires strong, coordinated action in areas such as market access, the movement of travellers, services, goods, quality and standards, and foreign direct investment.

“Despite the challenges that the SEMED region currently faces, it has tremendous potential for tourism as demonstrated by its record growth over the years. We must recall that tourism accounts for 15 per cent of the total exports of the region and that over the last 10 years international tourist arrivals increased from 48 million to 71 million in the MENA region alone. Considering tourism’s capacity to promote economic growth and advance inclusive development, we believe that this conference and its focus on investment will contribute to reviving the sector in the region,” said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai.

Mattia Romani, EBRD Managing Director for Economics, Policy and Governance, said: “Job creation and skills development, energy efficiency and MSMEs are priorities for the EBRD and by supporting the tourism sector we are targeting the various components to strengthen economic growth in the region. We also believe that an inclusive and thriving tourism sector that creates good jobs, in particular for young people, helps foster peace; when young people have good jobs, they also have incentives and ambitions to continue to grow, establish businesses, invest and, therefore, maintain such peace and stability. Together with UNWTO we are working to strengthen related policies and develop a sustainable sector.”

HE Lina Mazhar Annab, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities in Jordan, said: “Tourism is one of the most important socio-economic sectors in Jordan contributing close to 11 per cent to the gross domestic product. The government of Jordan realises the importance of this sector in generating revenue as well as in creating employment opportunities and has launched a number of economic reforms and incentives to facilitate investment in the country’s tourism. We need to continue providing all the necessary incentives to attract local and foreign direct investments in tourism because this sector generates jobs, empowers small and medium enterprises, and contributes heavily to the preservation and promotion of the natural and cultural heritage”.

Among the challenges for the sector, participants stressed the quality of the business environment (including public-private dialogue, political stability, security, visa facilitation, sanitation and health conditions, energy costs and other production factors); access to finance; availability

of a workforce with appropriate skills; compliance with international standards (in hospitality, services, food quality and safety, environmental and labour regulations); and access to tourist destinations (including the quality and availability of infrastructure, such as airports and ports).

A common roadmap

The Conference drafted the Petra Declaration on Investing in Tourism for an Inclusive Future. The Declaration calls on the private sector, investors, financial institutions, governments, academics and civil society to ensure that tourism development is based on responsible and sustainable planning, evidence-based decision making and the involvement of all stakeholders, including host communities and disadvantaged groups of society. The provision of fair access to quality training as well as employment opportunities for youth and women are also stressed in the Declaration.

Lastly, the Declaration pledges to build an inclusive and sustainable tourism sector based on human rights, social and economic justice and equality, including alignment with the principles of the International Labour Organization's *Decent Work Agenda*.

Madrid, Spain, 28 October 2016
PR No. 16080

UNWTO Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories welcomes Croatia Observatory

The Croatian Sustainable Tourism Observatory (CROSTO) has become a member of the UNWTO International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO). This Observatory, hosted by the Institute for Tourism in Zagreb, is responsible for monitoring sustainable tourism in the Adriatic Croatia.

“Sustainable tourism development requires adequate measurement and evidence-based decision-making. We are very pleased to welcome the Croatian Sustainable Tourism Observatory to the UNWTO INSTO Network. We trust it can make a key contribution to support the vision set by Croatia for the future of its tourism sector; a sector that contributes to the three pillars of sustainability: economic, social and environmental” said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai.

“Through its membership in INSTO, Croatia is also sharing the global strategic commitment to act responsibly and with care towards the space we live in,” mentioned the Ministry of Tourism of Croatia, Gari Cappelli.

Croatia's commitment to sustainability has been emphasized in its Tourism Development Strategy 2020. The initiative aims at fostering innovation in the framework of sustainable tourism. The efforts of the country in that regard have been recognized by the European Commission

through the ETIS Award to the City of Mali Lošinj. The breadth and depth of insights gathered on sustainable tourism practices on the island have been particularly praised in that recognition.

Luxor, Egypt / Madrid, Spain, 31 October 2016
PR No. 16082

UNWTO Executive Council meeting opens in Luxor, Egypt

The city of Luxor in Egypt is hosting the 104th meeting of the Executive Council of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) between 31 October and 1 November. The Meeting will discuss the three priorities of the Organization for 2016-2017: safe, secure and seamless travel; the impact of technology in the tourism sector and sustainability.

Attending the session are some 170 representatives from 40 countries, including 11 ministers and vice ministers of tourism (Argentina, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Costa Rica, Egypt, India, Japan, Republic of Korea; Serbia, Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe). The opening ceremony was presided over by UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai and the Minister of Tourism of Egypt, Mohamed Yehia Rashed.

“Egypt is a worldwide leader in tourism and will continue to be so. The high level of attendance at this meeting is a confirmation of the confidence of the international tourism community in Egypt. Supporting tourism to Egypt is supporting its future and that of the Egyptian people” said Mr Rifai.

“In many of our nations, tourism employs a large part of our labour force and helps to create immense benefits to our communities. The International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017 is a unique opportunity to work together in maximizing the contribution of our sector to protect the environment and cultural heritage” said Minister Yehia Rashed.

Speaking on the importance of promoting a safe, secure and seamless travel framework, the Minister said “We must commit to global efforts and work on restoring confidence in destinations affected by any crises namely by working with the media.”

The Council will also discuss the programme of work of the Organization and the agenda for the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017.

The Executive Council session will be followed on 1-2 November by the 5th UNWTO City Tourism Summit dedicated to the theme of ‘Cities: Local Culture for Global Travellers’.

The 105th Session of the UNWTO Executive Council will take place in May 2017 in Spain, host country of the Organization.

Madrid, Spain, 4 November 2016
PR No. 16084

UNWTO/WTM Ministers Summit discusses Safe and Seamless Travel

Minister of Tourism from over 50 countries and leaders from the private sector companies and associations will convene at the Ministers Summit organized by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the World Travel Market in London, to discuss safe, secure and seamless travel.

The 10th edition of the Minister Summit to be held on 9 November under the title 'Tourism and Security: Promoting Safe and Seamless Travel,' will address the major safety and security challenges that the sector faces, ways of cooperation and effective crisis preparedness and management.

As stated by UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai, "safety and security are key pillars of tourism development and we need to strengthen our common action to build a safe, secure and seamless travel framework. I trust this Summit will help us move forward on this important common challenge as we work to ensure that safety and security can go hand in hand with promoting a seamless travel experience."

World Travel Market London Senior Director, Simon Press, said: "Safe and Seamless travel is the key topic for all those involved in global travel and tourism. All the speakers at this year's summit have direct experience of the impact of terrorism and the fight to keep nations, citizens and tourists safe. I look forward to a thought-provoking and productive discussion".

The Summit is chaired by CNN International's Becky Anderson. Confirmed speakers include:

- Mr. Mark Tanzer, Chief Executive, ABTA
- Ms. Nina Brooks, Head, Security, Airports Council International (ACI) World
- H.E. Mr. Obediah Wilchcombe, Minister of Tourism of the Bahamas, Chairman of the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO)
- H.E. Ms. Beatrice Maille, Director General, Consular Policy Bureau , Global Affairs Canada, Canada
- H.E. Mr. Mohamed Yehia Rashed, Minister of Tourism, Egypt
- Mr. Vijay Poonosamy, Vice President International Affairs, Office of the President & CEO, Etihad Airways
- Mr. Paul Steele, Senior Vice President Member and External Relations, Corporate Secretary, International Air Transport Association (IATA)
- H.E. Mr. Vinod Zutshi, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, India
- Mr. Ryoichi Matsuyama, President, Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO)
- H.E. Mr. Edward Zammit Lewis, Minister of Tourism, Malta

- Mr. Fritz Joussen, Chief Executive Officer , TUI
 - H.E. Mrs. Selma Elloumi Rekik, Minister of Tourism and Handicrafts, Tunisia
 - H.E. Mr. Nabi Avci, Minister of Culture and Tourism, Turkey
 - Mr. Aldo Lale-Demoz, Deputy Executive Director and Director of the Division for Operations, UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
 - H.E. Ms. Isabel Hill, Director, National Travel and Tourism Office, United States Department of Commerce
 - Mr. David Scowsill, President and CEO, World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC)
- Moderator: Becky Anderson, CNN International

Madrid, Spain, 7 November 2016
PR No. 16085

Close to one billion international tourists in the first nine months of 2016

Destinations around the world welcomed 956 million international tourists between January and September 2016, according to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer. This is 34 million more than in the same period of 2015, a 4% increase.

Demand for international tourism remained robust in the first nine months of 2016, though growing at a somewhat more moderate pace. After a strong start of the year, growth was slower in the second quarter of 2016 to pick up again in the third quarter of the year. While most destinations report encouraging results, others continue to struggle with the impact of negative events, either in their country or in their region.

“Tourism is one of the most resilient and fastest-growing economic sectors but it is also very sensitive to risks, both actual and perceived. As such, the sector must continue to work together with governments and stakeholders to minimize risks, respond effectively and build confidence among travelers,” said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai.

“No destination is immune to risks. We need to increase cooperation in addressing these global threats, namely those related to safety and security. And we need to make tourism an integral part of emergency planning and response”, added Mr Rifai ahead of the Ministerial Meeting on Safe, Secure and Seamless Travel to be held at the World Travel Market in London on 9 November.

Mr. Rifai also recalled: “Real crises are often magnified or distorted by misperception and affected destinations are facing important challenges, although at the global level demand remains strong. We need to support these countries in restoring confidence, as doing so will benefit the entire tourism sector and society as a whole.”

Regional results

Asia and the Pacific led growth across world regions, with international tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) up 9% through September. All four subregions shared in this growth. Many destinations reported double-digit growth, with the Republic of Korea (+34%), Vietnam (+36%), Japan (+24%) and Sri Lanka (+15%) in the lead.

In Europe, international arrivals grew by 2% between January and September 2016, with solid growth in most destinations. Nonetheless, double-digit increases in major destinations such as Spain, Hungary, Portugal and Ireland were offset by feeble results in France, Belgium and Turkey. As a consequence, Northern Europe grew by 6% and Central and Eastern Europe by 5% while results were weaker in Western Europe (-1%) and Southern Mediterranean Europe (+0%).

International tourist arrivals in the Americas increased by 4% through September. South America (+7%) and Central America (+6%) led results, followed closely by the Caribbean and North America (both +4%).

In Africa (+8%), sub-Saharan destinations rebounded strongly throughout the year, while North Africa picked up in the third quarter. Available data for the Middle East points to a 6% decrease in arrivals, though results vary from destination to destination. Results started to gradually improve in the second half of the year in both North Africa and the Middle East.

Strong demand for outbound travel

The great majority of leading source markets in the world reported increases in international tourism expenditure during the first three to nine months of 2016.

Among the top five source markets, China, the world's top source market, continues to drive demand, reporting double-digit growth in spending (+19%). Likewise, robust results come from the United States (+9%), which benefited many destinations in the Americas and beyond. Germany reported a 5% increase in expenditure, the United Kingdom, a 10% increase, and France, 3% growth.

In the remainder of the top ten, tourism spending grew notably in Australia and the Republic of Korea (both +9%), and moderately in Italy (+3%). By contrast, expenditure from the Russian Federation declined 37% and from Canada a slight 2%.

Beyond the top 10, eight other markets reported double-digit growth: Egypt (+38%), Argentina (+27%), Spain (+19%), India (+16%), Thailand (+15%), Ukraine (+15%), Ireland (+12%) and Norway (+11%).

Prospects remain positive

Prospects remain positive for the remaining quarter of 2016 according to the UNWTO Confidence Index.

The members of the UNWTO Panel of Tourism Experts are confident about the September-December period, mostly in Africa, the Americas

and Asia and the Pacific. Experts in Europe and the Middle East are somewhat more cautious.

Note: Results reflect preliminary data reported to date and are subject to revision.

Madrid, Spain, 8 November 2016
PR No. 16086

Phoenician Tourism Route launched at the World Travel Market

An integral component of Mediterranean trade and culture, the Phoenicians' Route links 18 countries with a common heritage. With the aim of revitalizing this itinerary as a tourism route, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Ministry of Tourism of Lebanon and Council of Europe launched the Phoenicians' Route Cultural Tourism Programme, which integrates public and private sector, at World Travel Market in London.

During the event, participants discussed the development and marketing of three pilot cultural tourism itineraries along the Phoenicians' Route. The itineraries will connect three continents, 18 countries and more than 80 towns. They cover the various periods of Phoenician heritage: the Origin (Lebanon, Cyprus and Greece); the Punic and the Sea (Italy, Malta and Tunisia) and the Expansion (France and Spain).

"Nothing is better for bringing understanding to the region than having people travel this route. The capacity of tourism to link different cultures, traditions and faiths is immense, particularly in the Mediterranean, one of the most diverse areas of the world," said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai.

"The Phoenicians' heritage is still largely unknown. We trust this project will bring this heritage to life and show us how much we all have in common. This is especially important in these times that are in such need of dialogue among civilizations," said Minister of Tourism of Lebanon Michel Pharaon.

"This is a great opportunity to provide Europe with a tool to enhance its tourism offer and strengthen ties among countries and people," said Stefano Dominioni, Executive-Secretary of the Enlarged Partial Agreement for Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe and Director of the European Institute of Cultural Routes.

Issues of transport, connectivity, visa facilitation, branding and product development of this new Route were discussed with tour operators present at the event.

The Phoenicians' Route is the network of the nautical trade courses that Phoenicians used since the twelfth century BC in the Mediterranean Sea. These routes became an integral part of the essence of the

Mediterranean culture. The potential of the Phoenicians' Route to provide economic opportunities, intercultural exchange and cultural revival has been recognized by the Council of Europe.

Madrid, Spain, 8 November 2016
PR No. 16087

Amadeus, UNWTO and the Ministry of Tourism of Kenya partner to foster job creation

Amadeus, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Ministry of Tourism of Kenya have signed an agreement to provide youth and women of underprivileged communities with access to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in travel and tourism.

The pilot programme, to be launched in Kenya before the end of 2017, will include training for local communities through Amadeus customers. The initiative is expected to be replicated in countries around the world.

Taleb Rifai, UNWTO Secretary-General, said: "With 1,186 million international tourist arrivals in 2015, tourism is not only a catalyst for development but also for inclusion. Though in most regions women make up the majority of the tourism workforce, they tend to be concentrated in the lowest paid and lowest status jobs, and perform a large amount of unpaid work in family tourism businesses. We thus need to work together to ensure women can access better jobs in tourism".

H.E. Mr. Najib Balala, Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Tourism, explained: "Tourism is a key backbone to the region's economic development, with a projected growth of 16% by the end of 2016. This initiative enables us to empower women and our youth whilst building our local tourism and travel industry."

Svend Leirvaag, Vice President Industry Affairs, Amadeus IT Group, added: "Technology can help to enhance skill levels, professionalism, and also the commitment of the workforce. At Amadeus, we are equipping local communities with new technologies in line with our commitment to sustainable development. However, to really make a difference, this has to be an industry-wide effort".

Madrid, Spain, 10 November 2016
PR No. 16088

Economic and national security a common objective: UNWTO/WTM Ministerial

Ministers of Tourism from nearly 60 countries and industry leaders gathered at the Ministers' Summit organized by the World Tourism

Organization (UNWTO) and World Travel Market in London to discuss how to grow cooperation in safe, secure and seamless travel. The inclusion of tourism in crisis and emergency structures, travel advisories, perception and coordination were pointed as main issues to be addressed. Participants agreed that economic and national security can and should be a common objective.

The 10th edition of the Minister Summit was held under the title 'Tourism and Security: Promoting Safe and Seamless Travel'. The event discussed the various risks affecting travel and tourism - health scares, natural disasters, geopolitical changes and terrorism – and called for a full integration of tourism into national crisis and emergency structures.

The lack of a coordinated approach and the need to set crisis management systems were pointed out as the biggest challenges to safe, secure and seamless travel. Participants stress that security is a shared responsibility among public and private sector and across government administrations at all level. In this respect, they recalled the need to build global standards and recognition of mechanisms such as passengers' information.

"Underpinning our discussions is the conviction that advancing safe, secure and seamless travel requires national and international coalitions between all tourism and security stakeholders as well as between public and private sectors" said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai,

Perception was pointed out as one of the main obstacles in crisis management and recovery. In this respect, ministers and private sector called for increased capacity in crisis communication and management as well further collaboration among public and private sector and the media stressing that communication should be clear on 'what the situation is' and 'what is being done'.

Participants unanimously agreed that "what happens in any destination affects all others" and that as such the international community needs to work further together on travel advisories and increase dialogue between destinations and source markets. "Tourism brings jobs and economic growth; and if we fail to support destinations affected we fail to create social stability and peace" said participants.

The Summit was chaired by CNN International's Becky Anderson.

Summit Speakers: Mark Tanzer, Chief Executive, Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA); Nina Brooks, Head, Security, Airports Council International (ACI); H.E. Obediah Wilchcombe, Minister of Tourism of the Bahamas and Chairman of the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO); Beatrice Maille, Director General, Consular Policy Bureau, Global Affairs Canada, H.E. Mohamed Yehia Rashed, Minister of Tourism, Egypt; Vijay Poonoosamy; Vice President International Affairs; Office of the President & CEO; Etihad Airways; Paul Steele, Senior Vice President Member and External Relations, Corporate Secretary, International Air Transport Association (IATA); H.E. Vinod Zutshi, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Ryoichi Matsuyama, President; Japan National

Tourism Organization (JNTO); H.E. Edward Zammit Lewis, Minister of Tourism, Malta, Fritz Jousen, Chief Executive Officer, TUI; Aldo Lale-Demoz, Deputy Executive Director and Director of the Division for Operations, UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); Isabel Hill, Director, National Travel and Tourism Office, United States Department of Commerce and David Scowsill, President and CEO, World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC).

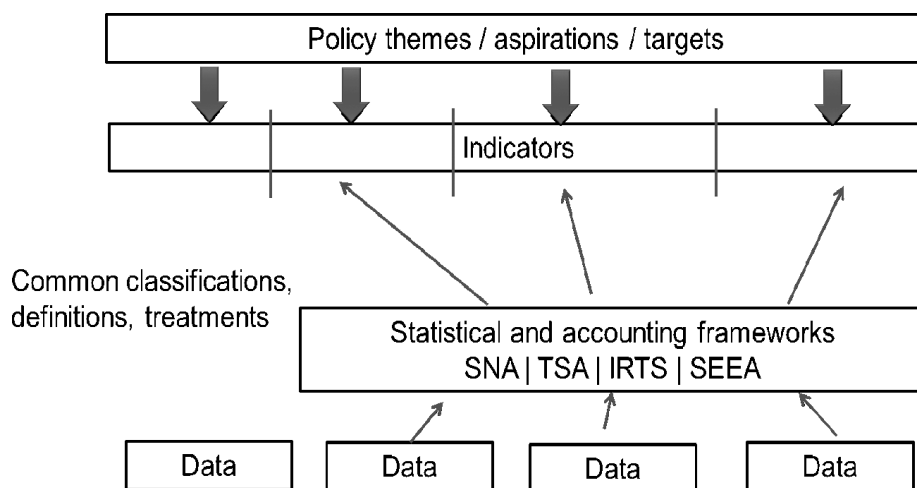
Madrid, Spain, 11 November 2016
PR No. 16089

UNWTO hosts 1st meeting of the Working Group of Experts on Measuring Sustainable Tourism

Policy experts and statisticians specialized in sustainable development, environment and tourism gathered to agree on the way forward in developing a statistical framework for sustainable tourism. The meeting was held at UNWTO headquarters in Madrid last 20-21 October.

The first meeting of the Working Group of Experts on Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST) agreed that developing a statistical framework for sustainable tourism is a priority to support integrated policy responses at national and destination level, and urged UNWTO to lead this effort.

The Group agreed that the core rationale for developing a statistical framework is to support the measurement of sustainable tourism in its various dimensions (economic, environmental and social) and at the relevant spatial levels (global, national, sub-national) by providing a common language and organizing structure for exploiting the richness of data already available and for identifying additional data that may be needed.



A statistical framework for sustainable tourism is the natural evolution of and complement to the standing statistical standards on tourism statistics: the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) and the International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics (IRTS). The starting foundation involves bridging the economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable tourism through two UN standards: the TSA and the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA).

A standards-based statistical framework can support the credibility, comparability and outreach of data and various measurement and monitoring programmes pertaining to sustainable tourism, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators.

“The Sustainable Development Goals and the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017 constitute a unique opportunity to advance sustainable, inclusive and responsible tourism; developing a statistical framework to measure sustainable tourism is essential in fostering a common understanding for tracking our progress,” said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai. “Tourism stakeholders at large will benefit from having a statistical framework for sustainable tourism much like we all benefit from the TSA which provides the framework for tourism’s economic contribution”.

More than 50 representatives from stakeholders like National Tourism Administrations, National Statistical Offices and Ministries of Environment from 13 countries, as well as subnational administrations, the private sector, academia, civil society, tourism observatories (including UNWTO-INSTO members) and multilateral organizations participated in the two day working session.

The meeting came at an important point in UNWTO’s initiative Towards a Statistical Framework for Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST) which is being developed since 2015 with the support of the UN Statistical Division and the engagement of Austria, Fiji, Italy, Mexico, The Netherlands and Cardiff University (Wales).

In addition to exchanging views and experiences, the Working Group of Experts considered the 8 discussion papers prepared for the meeting and the ongoing work of the 5 pilot studies in order to assess the feasibility and relevance of advancing towards a statistical framework to better inform and to advocate for sustainable tourism as well as to guide policy makers.

The Working Group emphasized that beyond being a technical exercise, developing and subsequently implementing a statistical framework for sustainable tourism is very much a strategic endeavor requiring stakeholder engagement, inter-institutional coordination and political leadership. These key issues need to be addressed in recognition of the multifaceted natures of tourism, environment and sustainable development.

Madrid, Spain, 14 November 2016
PR No. 16092

Tourism committed to fight climate change – COP 22

The role of tourism in implementing the Paris Agreement was on the table on the occasion of the 22nd Session of the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP22). The International Symposium of the Sustainable Tourism Programme of the United Nations 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP), held during COP 22, discussed how to advance Sustainable Tourism in a Changing Climate.

The Symposium aimed at increasing awareness on tourism and climate change-related issues and encourage the sector to engage in actions that reinforce national commitments to the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

“The tourism sector is both a vector and a victim of climate change and we are fully committed to contribute to reach the objectives set by the Paris Agreement. This event was essential to advance this agenda, especially the discussion on measurement and reporting requirements as a basis for identifying and prioritizing climate action in tourism”, said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai.

“Sustainable tourism creates opportunities and assembles partners to help transform the industry towards low emissions and more efficient and less polluting operations. We must make tourism and every other industry contributor to our climate change action and a sustainable future”, said Patricia Espinosa, UNFCCC Executive Secretary, in her video address to the event.

The event focused in particular in the need for partnerships with the private sector and the role of sustainable transportation to accelerate climate action in tourism.

“Climate change can only be addressed if actors from all parts of society - governments, businesses, NGOs and consumers - make a global and broad shift towards sustainable consumption and production patterns. Accounting for 10% of GDP, 7% of the world’s exports and one in 11 jobs, tourism is one of the main economic sectors in the world, and as such has to be at the core of this essential transition,” said Charles Arden-Clarke, Head of the 10YFP Secretariat.

The International Symposium was part of the 3-day COP22 Tourism Side Events organized by the 10YFP Sustainable Tourism Programme and hosted by the Ministry of Tourism of Morocco. The Programme is a partnership led by UNWTO with the Governments of France, Morocco and the Republic of Korea as co-leads, with support of the 10YFP Secretariat at UN Environment, aimed at accelerating the shift towards more sustainable consumption and production. It was followed by a networking event involving financial institutions on sustainable tourism

as well as by the Annual Conference on Saturday 12 November, where members of the network exchanged experiences and discussed priorities and next steps in the 10YFP Sustainable Tourism Programme.

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