



# SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

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## TOURISME DURABLE EN MÉDITERRANÉE



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**T**ourism is one of the most important economic sectors, particularly for regions with limited industrial or agricultural development options. Comparative traditional development disadvantages, such as small scale economies or lack of complex infrastructures, etc. may be turned into comparative advantages for quality tourism. Many Mediterranean tourist destinations could be considered as typical examples of such cases. However, when the development of tourism in a given area is not well planned, controlled and integrated into a wider development policy it may become unsustainable

Usually, tourism has a dynamic, two-way interaction with the environment. The pressures exerted by tourism on the natural and cultural environment and the socio-economic structures of a region are, at the beginning of the development of an area, a one-way aggression, a one-way reaction. It is meaningless to talk about the pressures or negative impacts of the environment on tourism in a new and well-managed tourist destination. Later on, however, in relatively old and over-exploited destinations we may see, eventually, the reverse reaction or, revenge reaction. Polluted, noisy and dusty historic towns, dirty, contaminated waters and coasts, seriously damaged biotopes and landscapes with crumbling relics of monuments, villages without special colour, identity, character, without local food and frequently without local people may have, indeed, a very negative impact on tourism. In other words, tourism consumes the natural and cultural capital on which it is based if not properly designed and operated. This happens whenever tourist activities exceed the carrying capacity of the system.

However, tourism has proven also to be an ac-

**L**e tourisme représente l'un des secteurs économiques les plus importants, surtout dans le cas de régions possédant des possibilités de développement industriel ou agricole limitées. Ce qui était traditionnellement considéré comme un désavantage comparatif en termes de développement, telles les économies de petite échelle ou le manque d'infrastructures complexes, etc. pourrait bien devenir un avantage comparatif en termes de tourisme de qualité. Nombreuses destinations touristiques de la Méditerranée pourraient servir d'exemples caractéristiques témoignant de la véracité de ces dires. Il est vrai, néanmoins, que si le développement touristique d'une région donné n'est pas convenablement planifié, contrôlé et intégré au sein d'une politique de développement plus généralisée, il peut ne pas acquiescer un caractère durable.

Le tourisme entretient généralement une interaction dynamique deux sens avec l'environnement. Les pressions qu'il exerce sur l'environnement naturel et culturel d'une région constituent, lors des premiers pas de développement de cette région, une agression unilatérale, en fait une réaction unilatérale. Cela n'a aucun sens de parler des pressions ou des impacts négatifs de l'environnement sur le tourisme, dans le cas d'une nouvelle destination touristique bien organisée. Cependant, il est possible dans une étape ultérieure, dans le cas de destinations relativement anciennes et surexploitées, de constater finalement une réaction inverse ou, autrement dit, une réaction de revanche. Les villes historiques polluées, bruyantes et poussiéreuses, les eaux et les côtes contaminées, les biotopes sérieusement endommagés, les paysages aux vestiges de monuments délabrés, les villages sans couleur particulière, sans identité ou caractère, sans nourriture du pays et, souvent, sans gens de la région, peuvent effectivement avoir un impact très négatif sur le tourisme. En d'autres termes, le tourisme dévore le capital naturel et culturel qui l'alimente, si sa planification et sa gestion ne sont pas appropriées. Tel est le cas chaque fois que les activités touristiques dépassent la capacité récréative du système.

Il a, néanmoins, été démontré que le tourisme peut ga-

tivity reasonably adaptable to sustainability criteria. Furthermore, there is an increasing trend where the stakeholders dealing with the tourist sector, understand that their capital is not only their investment and infrastructures but mainly the natural and cultural environment per se, which cannot and should not be consumed at ratios greater than its renewal capacity .

In view of the above, this issue of Sustainable Mediterranean aims to present a number of views, policies and efforts of various actors with interests in transforming the critical for the re-

lement constituer une activit pouvant raisonnablement s adapter de crit res de durabilit . Par ailleurs, il existe une tendance de plus en plus croissante de la part des parties prenantes du secteur touristique, qui commencent prendre conscience du fait que leur capital ne r side pas uniquement en leurs investissements et infrastructures, mais avant tout en l environnement naturel et culturel en tant que tels ; ces derniers ne peuvent pas et ne devraient pas tre abus s au-del de leur capacit de r g n ration .

C est dans cette optique que ce num ro de Sustainable Mediterranean souhaite pr senter un certain nombre de points de vue, de politiques et d efforts r alis s par les divers acteurs s int ressant la transformation du tou-

The views and opinions expressed in Sustainable Mediterranean by individual contributors do not necessarily reflect those of MIO-ECSDE or those of our sponsors.

### Corrigendum

*In the previous issue, no 30 of Sustainable Mediterranean, the address of **Helmepa Junior** should have been: Costa Mare Building, 60 Zefirou str. Palaio Faliro, 175 64, Athens, Greece*

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Many countries in the Mediterranean have suffered the negative impacts that poor management and overdevelopment of tourism have had on the environment. However, thanks to tourism the economic welfare of most of these countries has improved and in many cases they have come to depend almost entirely on tourism revenues.

At the beginning of the 90s, NGOs were mainly pushing for monitoring of eco tourism, or nature tourism. FoE MedNet considered that mass tourism was being ignored in the debate even though it was a major cause of serious negative impacts which affect sustainability.

So ten years ago MedNet began a campaign aimed in particular at mass tourism, to establish an Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean, at the same time promoting cooperation between the tourism industry, national and local authorities, non-governmental organisations and citizens groups. The aim was to identify areas for improvement in case-study destinations, to set in place environmental improvement projects, to introduce sustainable management of resources in existing tourist destinations and provide guidelines for emerging destinations. The pilot projects, monitored by local cross-sector committees, were successfully carried out in eight case study destinations situated in six different Mediterranean countries. An international committee consisting of representatives of intergovernmental organisations, international tour operators, NGOs, academics and experts in tourism provided support and information to the case study destinations.

The Action Plan proposed actions in ten key points:

1. Land use: improving planning; defending local architecture; protecting the coastline and natural spaces and promoting sustainable agriculture.
2. Solid waste treatment: promoting reuse and recycling, closing down illegal waste dumps; controlling construction waste.
3. Sewage treatment: providing adequate treatment; reuse for irrigation or street cleaning.
4. Preservation of historical patrimony and cultural heritage.
5. Embellish tourist zones: tree planting; renovating building facades; creating traffic-free zones and green spaces.
6. Environmental awareness raising campaigns for both visitors and local population.
7. Environmental management of accommodations:

water and energy saving; reducing waste; renewable energy; use of local products.

8. Municipal environmental policy: local authorities to set a good example by implementing in-house environmental policy.
9. Environmental practice for tour operators: encouraging environmental awareness amongst staff and tour guides; supporting local initiatives; improving transport policy.
10. Environmental Audits: regular audits by local authorities and businesses.

Later MedWet campaigned to introduce sustainability issues into the curriculum of tourism studies throughout schools in the Mediterranean.

These steps were definitely an advance towards sustainability, but the broader picture needs to be looked at in order to handle the serious threats to the sustainability of tourism.

For instance, although many major tour operators express an interest in improving their environmental performance, generally this is only when their clients have shown sensitivity towards the environment. However, price is usually the determining factor when choosing a mass tourism holiday. Tourists are increasingly choosing all inclusive holidays whereby all their food, drinks, services, etc. are included in the price of the package which is paid before departure, thus reducing to a minimum the income for the host countries and making it difficult for local entrepreneurs to flourish. Often the hotels are also owned by the tour operators, so the only benefit for the tourist destinations is employment, mainly in construction or hotel services, and even then only in the lesser paid jobs. Frequently local food is not used but flown in from far-away places or bought from the industrialised food market chains.

Another threat for sustainability is the increasing demand for second residences in the Mediterranean, especially in northern Mediterranean countries such as Spain, Italy and more recently in Croatia. This has led to many beautiful coastal and mountain areas becoming developed and has caused property prices to rise, making it difficult for local people to buy homes.

Generally speaking jobs in tourism are slightly better paid than in the agricultural sector. This has led to a gradual abandonment of villages and traditional lifestyles as people move to work in the mass tourism business. Also water previously used for irrigation has been divert-

ed to hotels for swimming pools, golf courses and tourist consumption.

A good example of an attempt to rectify the imbalance between the tourism industry and local needs was the ecotax which was introduced in the Balearic Islands two years ago as a means to provide financial support for agriculture, cultural heritage and the protection of natural spaces. Unfortunately it met with opposition from the tour operators and hoteliers and has since been eliminated by the present Balearic government. Still, an eco tax on tourism is one way to ensure that tourism also benefits the local communities as well as having positive effects for nature protection.

A Strategic Global Plan for Tourism in the Mediterranean is fundamental, in which the major tourism industry groups should play a role in supporting national and local sustainable tourism policies. This was the essential aim of the MedNet pilot project. Maybe the role of organising such a global plan could be taken on by the EU within the Euromed Partnership. Within this global policy, the issue of transportation must be included. Tourism numbers increase yearly and the current tendency to take frequent, shorter breaks increases travel

impacts, green house gas emissions, etc.

National governments in the Mediterranean need to develop their own Sustainable Tourism Policies with adequate supervision by the national and local authorities in order to guarantee a win-win situation for the local communities. Part of the benefits from the tourism industry should be reinvested to support other sectors such as agriculture, protection of natural areas and historical and cultural heritage. Such policies should define limits to tourism growth, using indicators to monitor this.

Southern and eastern Mediterranean countries need to support their entrepreneurs and improve training and qualifications of local people to enable them to hold higher positions within the tourism industry. Local communities should be involved in monitoring investments in their area.

Finally, legislation is important, but only if it is complied with. Without adequate monitoring, even the strictest environmental legislation may serve no purpose.

## CONCEPTUALIZING AND IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Sustainability in tourism is not easy to implement but lessons can be learnt from the mistakes of the past. The exploitation of natural assets for short-term profits while ignoring the medium and long-term impacts on the environment, natural resources as well as the socio-economic effects for the local communities is clearly unsustainable.

Sandy Hemingway for FoE MedNet

**M**editerranean tourism most often refers to mass coastal tourism which in most cases involves mature destinations which now face their future in the tourism industry with skepticism. Sustainable tourism, in line with the more general dominance of the sustainability concept, comes as the salvation and the promising solution to all encountered problems and the viability of the industry. However, most often it is not clear how sustainable tourism is translated into action in the Mediterranean mass tourism context.

Rejuvenation is the single aim of every mature Mediterranean destination. This includes the repositioning of the destinations away from the noisy, dirty, crowded image they have, thus attracting new markets, tourists of new nationalities and of a different socio-economic status. All they have to do is mitigate their environmental problems, apply a new marketing orientation and offer new diversified products - mainly by emphasizing on the good environmental quality and the cultural components, as well as by beautifying the seafront or some central places. In this way, it is believed that

wealthy tourists will be more appreciative and will adopt the area as their new Mecca. This category of tourists spends much more and therefore fewer of them are enough to sustain revenues. Furthermore, since they are fewer in numbers, problems of congestion and related environmental degradation is limited while, most importantly, they travel alone, without the intermediary tour operators who are a constant but inevitable bottleneck in every Mediterranean destination.

In this magic recipe of sustainability, there is an apparent failure to refer to a framework of sustainable tourism policy goals. This may be reflected in the failure of policies to address issues of importance either in relation to sustainability or Mediterranean tourism, not to mention the interlinkages -both positive and negative- that these issues may have.

For example, the role of Small and Medium Size Tourism Enterprises (SMTEs) is most often overlooked. SMTEs, which provide the vast majority of Mediterranean tourist accommodation, could hardly cater for the needs of

quality tourists nor could they reject the role of tour operators who act as intermediaries, sellers and promoters between them and their customers. Furthermore, the monoculture of tourism as an economic activity, as well as its consequences on strengthening the dependence on tourism distribution channels or on the society is also hardly addressed as unsustainable.

Tourism policies in the Mediterranean, no matter if they are coined sustainable or not, are treated in a fragmented way. This is after all the way in which tourism development has taken place in the first place. There is an apparent lack of guiding principles translated into a coherent framework of policy goals and related strategies.

Mass Mediterranean tourist destinations cannot afford to reject their main mass tourism product nor should they overlook the need to plan in a more holistic manner for a sustainable tourism. Rejuvenation might indeed be an important component in sustainable tourism policies in most Mediterranean mature destinations. However, it should be a part of it and not an end in it-

## TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The beauty of the landscapes and sea shores, the prestigious historical sites and the wealth of the cultural heritage, have led to many coastal leisure developments characterized by a high degree of cementing, creating pollution and threatening the coastal ecosystems balances. This kind of development is jeopardizing the sustainability of the tourism sector, the Mediterranean being the world's prime tourist destination.

However, tourism is mainly Euro-Mediterranean and relies to a great extent on tour operators who enjoy a virtual monopoly in the tourists' home countries. The absence of any long-term commitment to the destination countries by these operators means that it is not easy to preserve tourist areas from the pressures exerted on the sites. The sustainability of the tourism sector will have to take into account the impact of pollution and coastal development on environment. Competing countries have been unable to get together to establish a better relationship between tourism and sustainable development. The degradation affecting the common Mediterranean heritage is, thus, not only the effect but also the cause of unsatisfactory development that is inequitably shared and lacks the sustainability that it

should have. An adequate regional cooperation mechanism would contribute to a coherent management and development of tourist flows. Data on national and international tourism show a continued increase in tourism to Mediterranean countries with a concentration on coastal regions and an extension to new destinations.

Based on the work of the WTO and the MCSD, and the recommendations of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the Strategy should set out objectives and identify action processes in the following fields:

- ¥ the diversification of tourist destinations based on a better exploitation of the cultural and natural heritage;
- ¥ the promotion of land use planning, tourism carrying capacity assessments and impact studies to facilitate environmentally-friendly tourism;
- ¥ the conclusion by the enterprises concerned of the voluntary environmental agreements (UNEP) including the contribution of tourism enterprises to the management of protected sites.

from Preparation for a Mediterranean  
Strategy for Sustainable

## WHY THE EXPANSION OF THE TOURIST PERIOD IS AN UNSUSTAINABLE MEASURE

One of the most common recommendations for designing sustainable tourism models is the expansion of the tourist period, if possible, evenly throughout the year. At least in some cases MIO-ECSDE does not favour this without criticism. It is herewith explained why:

The low tourist season is an interval during which both nature and the local society recover. Local and regional production, administrative and institutional mechanisms are given the opportunity to recharge their batteries and restore, reorganise and renovate. There is a return to normal activity levels in their daily routine (normal for the size and character of the communities they serve).

In Rhodes, where MIO-ECSDE conducted a study and completed an important project called SUDECIR (**Sustainable Development of Cities and Regions**) supported by DGXII, the political authorities claimed that during the high tourist season it is very difficult for the various elected bodies such as the City Council or the Regional Prefectural Council, etc. to properly function, simply because most people are far too busy to devote time for the efficient management of the commons.

Many of the people employed in tourism during the high season are able, during the low season, to take care of their agricultural land and return to their traditional occupations, which also support the local and regional economy (as well as the tourism sector),

resisting the tourism monoculture. They have more time to devote to their family life and loved ones; more time to enjoy their local culture. They may speak and hear their own language, which is not the case during the high season, when each inhabitant corresponds to several foreigners.

Finally, and perhaps in more absolute terms, basic functions of nature need quiet intervals. Pollution dispersion and dilution in the sea, ground water recharge, mechanisms so important for crucial biological processes (including reproduction) and water economy are much more vulnerable during periods which now coincide with the low season. Elliniki Etairia (The Hellenic Society for the Protection of the Environment and the Cultural Heritage) has studied flora in archaeological sites and has found that these areas are frequently particularly rich in threatened and rare species. If vegetation is removed only few weeks earlier than usual, in order, for example, to receive early tourists the plants will not have the time to produce seeds and therefore biodiversity will be seriously threatened.

All of the above show how one of the so called panacea recipes found in most sets of sustainable tourism recommendations (expanding the tourist period), so easily recycled in many papers without proper understanding of its full consequences may cause major environmental, social and economic unbalance.

Excerpt from a presentation entitled  
"CONFLICTS BETWEEN TOURISM AND THE

## NETWORK OF CITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Tourism is one of the fastest expanding sectors of the economy all over the world. For its own nature, tourism has strong impacts on the environment and the social and economic structures of the tourism destinations.

It is a challenge and a responsibility for local and national governments to pursue sustainability in the development of tourism and to exploit its positive potential without giving way to its negative impacts.

With the above in mind, the **Network of Cities for Sustainable Tourism** was launched during the International

Conference for Sustainable Tourism in Rimini, Italy (June 2001)

The Network is open to local governments located in the European Union or the Mediterranean, where mass-tourism plays a major role in the local economy.

One of its main goals is to identify potential projects and programmes to implement and put into practice together.

In the short term, the Network partners are working at the production of a leaflet containing the **rules of the**

**sustainable tourist** . The leaflet will be used in the Network destinations to raise awareness among incoming tourists. It will also be a tool to improve **the communication between tour operators and local governments** in tourist destinations. In fact, one of the challenges of the sustainable development of tourism is the fact that the actors involved cannot easily meet and discuss common expectations and goals. Tour operators are often based far away from the destinations. Tourists visit destinations for short periods and sustainability is not always the first criterion of choice.

The Network partners are also discussing other topics relevant to sustainable tourism, like: sustainable purchasing, carrying capacity and seasonality, as well as the Local Agenda21 Forum and many other tools and methodologies that are available for local governments.

The Network partners to date are:

1. Calvi (Spain)
2. Canakkale (Turkey)
3. Cervia (Italy)
4. Chioggia (Italy)
5. Comunit Montana del Giovo (Italy)
6. Georgiopolis (Greece)
7. Kallithea (Isle of Rhodos, Greece)
8. Lloret de Mar (Spain)
9. Mancomunidad de Municipios de la Costa del Sol Occidental (Spain), representing Benhavis, Benalmadena, Casares, Estepona, Fuengirola, Ist n, Manilva, Mijas, Marbella, Oj n, Torremolinos.

10. Punta Umbr a (Spain)
11. Rimini (Italy)
12. San Benedetto del Tronto (Italy)
13. Sousse (Tunisia)
14. Tortol (Italy)
15. The Union of Local Authorities in Israel (representing the cities of Tel Aviv, Haifa, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Netanya, Bat Yam, Akko, and Nahariya)
16. Venice (Italy)

The chair of the Network is the Province of Rimini (Italy). The coordinator of the Network is ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability. ICLEI is an international association of local governments implementing sustainable development. Its mission is to build and serve a worldwide movement of local governments to achieve tangible improvements in global sustainability with special focus on environmental conditions through cumulative local actions.

For more information you may wish to visit our webpage: [www.iclei.org](http://www.iclei.org). The Network and its activities will be presented to the public once more very soon: in the occasion of the ITB Tourism fair in Berlin, Germany, 12-16 March 2004.

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## MEDITERRANEAN COASTAL TOURISM THE EIGHTH PLAGUE HITS THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

**W**ith 20 years of experience as an international environmental NGO dealing with areas subject to high tourist use and potential, we have noticed that two things are missing from current concepts of sustainable tourism discussion. These are an understanding of the wide variation in the character of individual tourists, and the structure of the tourist industry as it develops and declines.

As mankind congregated in huge cities and became tied to the economic structures of the past few centuries, migratory instincts remained dormant for a time, and then with modern means of travel burst out into the formalised annual migration we call tourism. In many ways tourism reflects human history, in that the first few anthropoids multiplied into the huge human population of today, so tourism has the same inevitable growth and propensity for self-destruction.

Tourism, what is it? The locust industry, the Eighth Plague, Creeping Death, or just a reasonable recreation for 21<sup>st</sup> century populations?

There are different classifications of tourists and tourism. These range from the environmentally friendly people who seek out the quiet, unspoiled and beautiful places, off the beaten track, all the way to those who participate in mass tourism wanting only to have a good time far from the cares and worries of their everyday lives, caring little for the cultures and habitats around them.

*Early arrivals.* Living close to the cultures and environment around them staying as guests in village houses.

*The immigrants.* Arrive as tourists and then become a part of the community.



*The day visitors.* These start to arrive looking for local colour.

*The wealthy travel set.* Becoming an in destination. The locals start to look for ways they can cash in. All kinds of peripheral tourist services start to appear.

Eventually the wealthy set move-on to the latest in destination. The Mass Market Tour Operators move in to capitalise on underused facilities that can be negotiated in bulk cheaply.

Soon major investment, holiday villages, self-catering apartments, ghetto areas for local colour, provide a lifestyle much closer to the one the tourists have left at home. Local culture and infrastructure is swamped. Beer and mayhem reign. But even this does not last. Soon a barren, degraded, culture-less concrete hell has replaced the original idyllic setting. The only option left is industrial development, completing the environmental and cultural destruction.

This is the unending, inevitable chain of events on the tourism circuit, each step following the other so reasonably. Who could deny local inhabitants the right to pursue their dreams of a better life financed by the tourist dollars?

Certainly not their own political leaders, eyes firmly on political cost, nor uncaring developers, both of them will pay lip service to the pleas of the environmentalists.

Sustainable Tourism - is this a valuable concept, or an easily misinterpreted and misrepresented catch phrase? Without a reliable and positive indicator for the impact of Tourism on nature and culture it seems to have little value.

We really should not be talking about sustainable Tourism, but about a sustainable environment. The fact is that no development of any kind should be allowed to proceed without an in-depth impact assessment carried out by truly independent third parties, untainted by association with vested interests be they commercial or political. It follows of course that the recommendations arising from the impact assessment must be followed in full. Not just shelved, the legal requirement for an impact assessment having been met.

For instance at Akamas in Cyprus, a nesting place for the most endangered Mediterranean sea turtle species *Chelonia mydas*, where a World Bank management study called for strict protection and conservation, the Government has given permission for the construction of a hotel complex, a marina, car parks, roads, holiday

villas and much more is planned to follow.

We have to learn to put a cost on the collateral damage arising from development, in all of its aspects and ramifications, and in monetary terms. If the American courts award damages of millions of dollars for the loss of a single human life, then every single living creature or plant in the world deserves similar treatment. As to the loss of a local community's cultural inheritance, for myself, I believe that this is of such immense value that no development should be allowed to threaten it.

### **Recommendations:**

Before any location is either opened up to tourism or has its tourist facilities enlarged, an independent environmental and cultural impact assessment as outlined above is imperative, with its recommendations unfailingly implemented.

- The type and level of tourist activity should be defined and strictly applied.
- Numbers of tourists in any given location should be strictly controlled.
- Nowhere should tourist numbers be allowed to exceed the capacity of local infrastructures (sewage and rubbish disposal, water supplies, etc).
- Following an unbiased awareness campaign outlining the pros and cons of the project, an independent public opinion poll should be carried out embracing all sectors of the local population.
- Those who are making money from the Tourists should themselves pay high levels of compensation to those whose lifestyle is in any way damaged by the trade, not the public purse.
- No incompatible activities should be allowed to develop. i.e. An all night disco at a sea turtle nesting beach.

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This is an EU-LIFE Project (November 2000 – June 2003) that tackles the issue of sustainable tourism development in mass tourism coastal destinations. The intensive tourism development of Rimini has made this resort, with its 2,700 hotels, the one with the highest tourist density in Italy. Tourism puts relevant pressure on the natural resources of the district, and causes problems linked to waste and pollutants production, road traffic, urban congestion. Therefore further planning and private operators policies need to be reconsidered, also taking into account the evolution of tourism expectations, more and more concerned of the environmental quality of the destination and of the facilities chosen for their holidays.

The general objective of the project was to foster the integration between tourism and environmental strategies. This general aim is pursued through the following main actions:

- integration of the knowledge of the areas problems, by analysing on a wide scale its critical aspects and using an assessment method involving relevant stakeholders (Carrying Capacity Assessment, Integrated

Coastal Zone Management)

- integration of the indicators set for the State of the Environment report with specific ones able to measure the performance of tourist activities
- implementation of a strategic and integrated planning that will take into account the needs of all stakeholders
- definition of an integrated strategy for the private sector, according to the specific needs and characters of the operators in the Province, acting on 3 levels: supply flows, environmental targets for the offered services and environmental management actions and procedures.

The achievement of a broad social agreement on new ideas and projects in the sustainable tourism area were also pursued within the planned activities. Results were disseminated through two International Conferences, a permanent web site and through the establishment of a network of mass tourism destinations. On June 30<sup>th</sup> 2001, during the International Conference on Sustainable Tourism, the Rimini Charter was drafted and adopted. Herewith are the recommendations that are included in

**Rimini Charter**  
30 June 2001

European countries of the Mediterranean area and the areas of mature tourism, must:

- Assume the responsibility of revising their development models and strategies, and
- Innovate their tourist product, confirming their cultural identity and diversity and to give value to their products, human resources and local economies in the direction of social, economic and environmental sustainability of tourism and of an environmental rehabilitation of the territory able to consider also the global dimension of the problems.

We engage ourselves directly in implementing, widening and promoting good practices of sustainable management of tourism, in line with the aims and contents of the following recommendations.

We ask to all those that, at different levels can give a contribution, in partnership among them and respecting their own different and specific role, to take part

in the effort for the definition of a common framework of policies, with particular effort to those at the European level and at the Mediterranean scale, with the aim to implement the following recommendations.

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

**Promote the use of participation and strengthen and build active partnership** (as proposed by the models introduced by the local Agenda 21 and the UNEP and European approaches for the Integrated Coastal Zone Management), recognising participation as a fundamental success factor so as to activate sustainability.

Participation strategies must be developed from the first phases of the decision processes, must influence the same, must be closely integrated with democratic representation systems.

The partnerships constructions must particularly involve and integrate:

- all stakeholders (public authorities, tour operators, tourist business, environmental and consumer associations, trade unions, local communities, workers and tourists, the Universities and Institute of Training and Research),
- all government levels (from the international to local, with particular attention to the last),
- all sectors involved (transport, land use, environment, tourism, etc.)
- neighbouring areas (land/sea, inland/coastal) with the aim of defining and sub-dividing the responsibilities of each stakeholder with reference to relevant actions for the achievement of a sustainable tourism.

**Promote and enforce the sustainable and integrated management, programming and planning in coastal areas** with particular focus on mass tourism destinations :

- adopting on behalf of the Council and European Parliament of the E.U. recommendations regarding the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) strategies,
- introducing the approach proposed by the said recommendations in the National/Regional strategies,
- Sustaining the concrete activation at local level,

In particular we underline the importance of:

- coastal areas as a whole, covering appropriate areas of land (and sea),
- considering all the significant issues for long term social, economic, and environmental development,
- reviewing national policies and legislation, promoting regional guidelines,
- identifying and co-ordinating all sectoral plans (land use, water, energy, transport, tourism, etc ) and introducing an Integrated Management of Coastal Areas in the existing institutional and planning systems,
- establishing precise strategic goals through projects strongly aimed at action and able to adapt to change,
- strengthening and individualise new tools (regulations, management, information & education, economic incentives, pilot projects, etc..) so as to address the more mature tourist areas towards urban renewal, improvement of urban and social quality, land rehabilitation, renaturalization and more sustainable patterns.

**Maintain international and local engagement for the development and use of analytical tools, so as to support decisions and actions,** such as:

- analysis of ecological, social and economic carrying capacity of the destinations,
- prevision and evaluation of the environmental impact of tourism services/products (L.C.A., E.I.A., S.E.A.),
- multi-level sustainable indicators able to permanently monitor changes in time and space of the main impact results as defined by Integrated planning and Agenda 21 processes.

The use of these tools must be based on participatory processes, must serve to define and support the actions for sustainable tourism, must be scientifically reliable and comprehensible by final users. Basic information must be produced and made available through a co-ordination of the competent bodies.

**Strengthen the capabilities of local governments in order for them to be able to fulfil their policy, planning, public management and control of the tourist sector:**

- Formation promotion, exchange of good practices national and international co-ordination between already existing networks and different local realities with similar problems,
- Sustain environmental marketing of the territory and exploitation of positive experiences.

**Implement specific actions focused on Mobility with the support and realisation of local Pilot projects useful to demonstrate the feasibility and efficacy of alternative and sustainable systems.** Among these:

- Support for the realisation integrated networks for the pedestrian and bicycle mobility,
- Promotion of innovative systems and services (car-sharing, bus call, taxi-sharing and car pooling),
- Strengthening of the integration between different means of transports at local, regional and national level and improvement of attractiveness of collective transport with low environmental impact,
- European national and local actions on taxes and transport costs (as defined by EU Strategy for Sustainable Development) and promotion of integrated packages with services related to tourist accommodations and mobility.

**Promote sustainable alternatives to seasonal mass tourism** (reducing the tourist seasonal peaks and distributing over the entire year):

- Exploiting the tourism complementarity and synergies with other economic sectors,
- promoting development and the use of cultural, ecological, inland - rural tourism environmentally com-

patible.

**Promote economic tools (new financial mechanisms, incentives, taxes, ) to assist destinations in their efforts to achieve a more sustainable tourist industry. Financial resources may come from:**

- the private sector, with investments aimed at improving the performance of tourist business and the quality of the area in which the sector offers its products and services,
- the public sector, with an aimed use of available regional, national and European funds, strengthening existing finances (European programs such as Life, INTERREG ...) and further integrating the sustainable tourism in mature tourism areas priority within the European Structural Funds and national funds for the Objective Areas , with the aim of favouring the realisation of pilot projects in destinations characterised by mass tourism.

**Ensure and promote good environmental and social management of destinations and infrastructures:**

- encouraging use of tools for environmental quality (as declaration of intent, voluntary agreements, Ecolabel, clean technologies, environmental management systems),
- guaranteeing respect of workers rights and promoting the Ethical Certification (SA 8000 or other recognised patterns),
- promoting a gradual approximation in the certification sector so as to guarantee quality and credibility, but at the same time maintaining flexibility and ability to take into consideration differences between environmental contexts and services offered,
- enforcing synergies and coherence between efforts carried out at territorial level by public administrations (e.g Local Integrated Action Plan, AG21, Reporting, EMAS, ISO, at territorial level .) and at facilities level by private operators,
- promoting formation, awareness, marketing of benefits achieved thanks to the improvements of environmental and social management.

## EU & TOURISM

The EU has a range of mandates to work with tourism development. Within the Commission, the Tourism Unit of Directorate General Enterprise coordinates tourism in the context of tourism's importance for growth, prosperity and employment. The European Environment Agency provides information to policy making agents and the public on Europe's environment - and therefore also focusses on tourism.

The European Commission called for an EU-wide drive to enhance the economic, social and environmental sustainability of European tourism in a Communication adopted 24 November 2003. Basic orientations for the sustainability of European tourism emphasises the need to ensure the consistency of various Community policies and measures affecting the sustainability of tourism and the industry's competitiveness. It also calls for proactive co-operation among tourism enterprises, tourist destinations and national, regional and local authorities to address challenges such as growing demand and changing preferences whilst at the same time increasing revenues.

The sustainability drive needs to address the social responsibility of tourism enterprises, the possibility for all citizens to participate in tourism, good job opportunities in the sector and benefits from tourism activities for local communities. It also entails preserving Europe's cultural integrity, and incorporating environmental issues and protecting heritage resources in tourism measures. To stimulate efforts in this field, the Commission intends to establish a Tourism Sustainability Group, in which representatives from all territorial and administrative levels will set out guidelines for the sector. EU-wide initiatives include:

- stimulating the coherence and effective contribution of EU policies, and of complementary measures in the sphere of tourism;
- actively participating in global and international processes, interlinking with international governmental bodies, and bringing together the activities of major international players;
- practising and promoting the principles of good governance; and
- helping European, national, regional and local private and public stakeholders to assume their re-

sponsibilities for the sustainability of tourism production.

The Tourism Sustainability Group is to draft a detailed framework for action, which should allocate specific activities to the individual stakeholder groups. Specific initiatives, to be assisted by appropriate information tools and networks, will include activities that address tourism consumption patterns and enhance sustainability in the tourism value chain and destinations.

In a global context, the EU approach is to press for the sustainability of tourism to be addressed in policies on trade assistance to the developing countries. It also seeks reinforced co-operation with UN bodies and other international organisations on tourism sustainability. This initiative is a concrete follow-up to one of the ten measures that the Commission announced in its Communication

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/services/tourism/working\\_together](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/services/tourism/working_together) adopted two years ago.

Before drafting its Basic orientations for the sustainability of European tourism, the Commission undertook a wide public consultation (<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/services/tourism/consultation/index.htm>) ad-

ressed to any interested party. Furthermore, the ideas considered for these orientations were the subject of an Extended Impact Assessment that resulted in a specific Commission staff document — available at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/services/tourism/tourism-publications/documents/exia.pdf>

Some of the key activities advocated in the Communication are:

- Promoting dialogue with the tourism industry and other interested parties by holding an Annual Tourism Forum and extending the remit of the Advisory Committee on Tourism.
- Fostering networking services and support functions, for instance through competence centres (observatories, study and research centres) at national, regional and local levels.
- Ensuring good use of the EU's financial and non-financial instruments to the benefit of the tourism industry, in co-operation with national and regional authorities, and with operators
- Promoting sustainable development by further elaborating on and implementing the Agenda 21 guidelines
- Defining and disseminating assessment methods and

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/services/tourism/policy-areas/sustainability.htm>

## TOURISM IN THE WSSD FINAL PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION

The Plan of Implementation included in the WSSD Final Report, agreed by Heads of State at Johannesburg, includes the following paragraph (No 43) concerning Tourism:

"Promote sustainable tourism development, including non-consumptive and eco-tourism, taking into account the spirit of the International Year of Eco-tourism 2002, the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage in 2002, the World Eco-tourism Summit 2002 and its Quebec Declaration, and the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism as adopted by the World Tourism Organization in order to increase the benefits from tourism resources for the population in host communities while maintaining the cultural and environmental integrity of the host communities and enhancing the protection of ecologically sensitive areas and natural heritages. Promote sustainable tourism development and capacity-building in order to con-

tribute to the strengthening of rural and local communities. This would include actions at all levels to:

- (a) Enhance international cooperation, foreign direct investment and partnerships with both private and public sectors, at all levels;
- (b) Develop programmes, including education and training programmes, that encourage people to participate in eco-tourism, enable indigenous and local communities to develop and benefit from eco-tourism, and enhance stakeholder cooperation in tourism development and heritage preservation, in order to improve the protection of the environment, natural resources and cultural heritage;
- (c) Provide technical assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to support sustainable tourism business development and investment and

tourism awareness programmes, to improve domestic tourism, and to stimulate entrepreneurial development;

- (d) Assist host communities in managing visits to their tourism attractions for their maximum benefit, while ensuring the least negative impacts on and risks for their traditions, culture and environment, with the support of the World Tourism Organization and other relevant organizations;
- (e) Promote the diversification of economic activities, including through the facilitation of access to markets and commercial information, and participation of emerging local enterprises, especially small and medium-sized enterprises.

Further references to tourism can be found in the Plan of Implementation related to energy and biodiversity conservation, Small Island Developing States and African issues:

"20. (b) Integrate energy considerations, including energy efficiency, affordability and

accessibility, into socio-economic programmes, especially into policies of major energy-consuming sectors, and into the planning, operation and maintenance of long-lived energy consuming infrastructures, such as the public sector, transport, industry, agriculture, urban land use, tourism and construction sectors"

"44. (b) Promote the ongoing work under the Convention on Biological Diversity on the sustainable use on biological diversity, including on sustainable tourism, as a cross-cutting issue relevant to different ecosystems, sectors and thematic areas"

"VII. Sustainable development of Small Island Developing States

58. (g) Develop community-based initiatives on sustainable tourism by 2004, and build the capacities necessary to diversify tourism products, while protecting culture and traditions, and effectively conserving and managing natural resources"

"70. Support Africa's efforts to attain sus-

## AGENDA 21 FOR THE TRAVEL & TOURISM INDUSTRY

### Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development

In 1996 three International Organizations - the World Travel & Tourism Council, the World Tourism Organization and the Earth Council, joined together to launch an action plan entitled Agenda 21 for the Travel & Tourism Industry: Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development - a sectoral sustainable development programme based on the Earth Summit results. The document is of particular significance to Travel & Tourism companies, governments, national tourism administrations (NTAs), and representative trade organizations, as well as the travelling public.

The Travel & Tourism industry has a vested interest in protecting the natural and cultural resources which are the core of its business. It also has the means to do so. As the world's largest industry, it has the potential to bring about sustainable development of the communities and countries in which it operates. Concerted action from governments, and all sectors of the industry, will be needed in order to realize this potential and to secure long-term future development.

The Agenda 21 for the Travel & Tourism Industry doc-

ument contains priority areas for action with defined objectives and suggested steps to be taken to achieve them. The document emphasizes the importance of the partnerships between government, industry and non-government organizations, analyses the strategic and economic importance of Travel & Tourism and demonstrates the enormous benefits in making the industry sustainable.

The framework for sustainable development to be established by the Travel & Tourism industry should be based on the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, from which the following guiding principles flow:

- Travel & Tourism should assist people in leading healthy and productive lives in harmony with nature.
- Travel & Tourism should contribute to the conservation, protection and restoration of the earth's ecosystem.
- Travel & Tourism should be based upon sustainable patterns of production and consumption.
- Travel & Tourism, peace, development and envi-

ronmental protection are independent.

- Protectionism in trade in Travel & Tourism services should be halted or reversed
- Environmental protection should constitute an integral part of the tourism development process
- Tourism development issues should be handled with the participation of concerned citizens, with planning decisions being adopted at local level
- Nations shall warn one another of natural disasters that could affect tourists or tourist areas
- Travel & Tourism should use its capacity to create employment for women and indigenous peoples to the fullest extent
- Tourism development should recognize and support the identity, culture and interests of indigenous peoples
- International laws protecting the environment should be respected by the Travel & Tourism industry.

For Travel & Tourism companies, the main aim is to establish systems and procedures to incorporate sustainable development issues as part of the core management function and to identify actions needed to bring

sustainable tourism into being. The ten priority areas for action are:

- Waste minimization, reuse and recycling
- Energy efficiency, conservation and management
- Management of fresh water resources
- Waste water management
- Hazardous substances
- Transport
- Land-use planning and management
- Involving staff, customers, communities in environmental issues
- Design for sustainability
- Partnerships for sustainable development

The challenge of achieving the aims laid out in Agenda 21 for the Travel & Tourism Industry: Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development is not underestimated. It will require fundamental reorientation. However, the cost of inaction will far outweigh those of action. In the short term, damage to the industry's resources will continue and businesses may face increasing regulatory or economic penalties - particularly in the wake of the United Nations follow-up to the Rio

## TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Manifesto of the Mediterranean Greens adopted in Palma de Mallorca,  
Sunday 6 April, 2003

We, the Mediterranean Greens meeting in Palma de Mallorca on April 4-6, 2003, have adopted the following resolution on tourism in the Mediterranean region.

### Introduction

The importance of mass tourism in the economy of many countries is increasing. Tourism in coastal areas of the whole Mediterranean region is expected to grow from 160m visitors in the year 2000 to 260m visitors in 2025. We express our profound concern over the serious ecological, socio-economic and cultural impacts of growing mass tourism in the Mediterranean region. The major impacts are: overexploitation of natural resources, in particular water, land, energy sources, biodiversity, therefore going far beyond the regional carrying capacity; social impacts such as raising prices to local population (especially housing), increasing instability and seasonality of the labour market; economic impacts such as extreme concentration of local economy in one sector resulting in weakening the other economic activities and dependence on external capital; and cultural impacts such erosion of local traditions and identity.

### Objectives

Tourism development can move towards sustainability if the following objectives are implemented:

- Conserving and enhancing landscape and cultural and environmental heritage,
- Maintaining a balance with the other productive sectors,
- Improving quality of life and working conditions of the local hosting communities and
- Seeking long-term development strategies and enhancing local democracy.

### Policy integration versus fragility

Tourism is a fragile and instable sector due to the dependence upon external factors, possible changes of habits, loss of purchasing power of the clients, competition, economic fluctuations in the countries generating tourism flows. Furthermore, the Mediterranean region is especially vulnerable due to its fragile ecosystems, water scarcity, and climate change, and to the endemic social and political conflicts. The integration of

social, environmental and economic dimensions is therefore required in order to promote sustainable tourism. Tourism sector is not to be considered a mere commercial commodity, and it should not be subjected to WTO rules. Herewith are some of the basic measures to promote integrated development and green tourism:

- a. Co-ordinated policies between regions of origin and the tourism destination regions, and between tourism operators and local communities;
- b. Increased social, economic and environmental co-operation between the North and the South shores of the Mediterranean Sea to prevent social and environmental dumping and unfair competition;
- c. Urban and land planning which gives priority to the renewal of existing settlements instead of new tourism developments, and which seeks the benefits for the whole local community, and not just for speculative segments of the economy;
- d. Conservation and rehabilitation of natural and cultural heritage, including sustainable landscape planning;
- e. Access restrictions in sensitive areas in terms of number of tourism population on the basis of the carrying capacity of these areas;
- f. Fiscal measures to mitigate environmental consequences, regulate mass tourism, stimulate social participation in environmental management, and internalize social and environmental tourism development costs;
- g. Promotion of qualified and stable jobs;
- h. Participation of institutional, social and economic stakeholders in the democratic management of tourism programs;
- i. New policies to increase the quality of tourism, such as specialization and permanent training, use of new sustainable technologies, co-operative management local initiatives which are alternative to major tour operator companies;
- j. Marketing and information strategies which avoid misleading advertising and promote instead eco-labels, auditing, benchmarking, international agreements, etc., therefore avoiding the negative effects of tourism globalization and standardisation of tourism;
- k. Encouraging ecotourism and agritourism within a rural development strategy that promotes local traditional activities and preserves biodiversity, both endangered by the present mass tourism tendencies;
- l. Developing indicators of sustainability to be applied in the economic research on tourism and to be used by local and regional councils to monitor development policies.

## European dimension

Tourism growth forecasts say tourism industry will soon become the most important services industry of the European Union, and in particular in the Mediterranean region. Given the international dimension of the tourism industry, current weak regulations on tourism, the instability of consumer patterns and the possible variations of the economic situation, as well as the frequent irregularity or instability of workers status, and the important social and ecological external tourism development costs, tourism policy cannot be simply dealt with at the national level. A European governance approach is required to give answers to the open questions on the future of tourism.

We therefore need:

- The revision of the EU treaties for the adoption of a common policy on sustainable tourism,
- A better co-ordination at local, national and European level between sectoral policies affecting tourism,
- The adoption of a European Agenda 21 on tourism, where European institutions are involved together with tourism operators, NGOs, and local and regional authorities. This Agenda 21 should represent the response of Europe to the challenges of the integration of sustainability in tourism,
- The promotion of European best-practice networks on sustainable tourism,
- The definition of a EU framework legislation for quality tourism which sets criteria and quality objectives in environmental, labor market and tourism services terms,
- The implementation of strategic environmental assessment procedures to local, regional and national plans and programs concerning the tourism industry, along the lines of Directive 42/2001 (Strategic Environmental Assessment directive),
- The implementation of integrated coastal zones management principles to the mostly exposed areas to tourism pressure as a pre-condition for the allocation of European Union Structural funds to coastal regions,
- The organization of a European Fair on sustainable tourism for concerned economic operators and consumers,
- The EU support for organic farms/products in rural tourism as well as for safer and environmentally friendlier transport to, from and at the touristic destination,
- The definition of a system of tourism indicators of quality and efficiency, in order to measure the progress towards sustainability in the tourism industry; progress should be certified by ecolabels and



- green auditing,
- The adoption of fiscal mechanisms allowing the incorporation of social and environmental costs generated by mass tourism industry. In other words, the harmonization of fiscal policy at the European level and the integration of the polluter pays principle,
- The promotion of voluntary schemes allowing consumers to voluntarily allocate resources to environmental restoration and landscape planning in tourism areas (sort of green cards: this is a common practice in the UK),
- The support of local and regional strategies for a moratorium on mass tourism growth, with the aim of regenerating natural, cultural and landscape heritage,
- Promotion of the re-investment of part of the profits of tour operators in local development projects in Third countries to benefit local communities and fair trade initiatives,
- The elaboration of statistics by EUROSTAT and EU member states on the needs, behaviours and sus-

## TOURISM AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION ELIMINATING POVERTY

As a central component of its work on triple bottom line sustainability, the World Tourism Organization has initiated research and consultation on the interrelationship of tourism and poverty. In recent years this focus has intensified as it has become apparent that this sector has immense potential to help the global anti-poverty fight. Our analysis leads to the conclusions that:

- in the world's developing countries and particularly the LDCs, tourism is almost universally the leader in economic growth, foreign exchange, investment and job creating sectors.
- It is one of the few areas of potential comparative advantage common to all of these countries.
- It has unique potential to carry exchange and investment directly to the local level as tourists and entrepreneurs seek new destinations.
- It can contribute significantly to rural development, agricultural transformation, community enrichment and social empowerment, particularly for women.
- It can preserve cultural and heritage traditions - there are excellent examples for guidance.
- Its product in these countries is in the mainstream of market evolution towards eco-tourism presenting

an opportunity for continual above average growth providing transport, infrastructure and sustainability criteria are effectively assured. The latter is pivotal.

- There are several developments which can be used as models, capable of prudent intra and inter regional adaptation.
- Developed states, agencies, enterprises and travelers themselves must adopt a proactive approach to tourism as a catalyst for poverty alleviation.
- The World Tourism Organization will play a central role in advancing this proposition and shepherding it through the stakeholder communities

A report that reflects the WTO's concern that the benefits of tourism should be widely spread in society and that the poor should benefit from tourism development can be downloaded at <http://www.world-tourism.org/is-root/wto/pdf/1267-1.pdf>. It reviews current experience of tourism and poverty reduction in order to identify what is known about the contribution, which the tourism industry can make to the elimination of poverty; and makes recommendations for action by government, the

### **DestiNet** **Sustainable Tourism Information Portal** <http://destinet.ewindows.eu.org/>

An Internet Portal for tourism destinations. The portal contains selected, quality assessed information on the ways in which tourism is being made more sustainable. DestiNet offers a number of services including the option to post news bulletins and suggest new links on relevant topics. The information is grouped into

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOTOURISM**

### A Compilation of Good Practices in SMEs

This new publication is the 3rd of a series of good practice compilations, and it has been prepared in the follow up to the International Year of Ecotourism 2002. This compilation contains 65 case studies received from 47 countries about exemplary practices in small ecotourism businesses. As the translations have been recently completed, this publication is now available in English, Spanish and French:

<http://www.world-tourism.org/cgi-bin/infoshop.storefront/EN/product/1312-1ch>

### **Milestones and documents**

- Agenda 21
- The International Conference in Lanzarote (1995)
- WTTC/WTO/Earth Council Agenda 21 for the Travel & Tourism Industry (1996)
- The International Conference in Calvi (1997)
- The International Congress in Sant Feliu de Guixols, organised by Mediterranean NGOs (1998)
- 1999 UN Commission for Sustainable Development's (CSD) decision on Tourism and Sustainable Development
- UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) — Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) Recommendations and Proposals for Action on Tourism and Sustainable Development (1999)
- The work produced by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) especially the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism adopted in 1999
- The work of the Tour Operators Initiative, in partnership with UNEP, WTO and UNESCO
- The European Strategy on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM —2000)
- The European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development (2001)
- The preliminary documents of the European Agenda 21 for sustainable tourism
- Multi-stakeholder Tourism Industry Report issued for the 2002 WSSD
- 2002 WTTC publication Corporate Social Leadership for the Travel & Tourism Industry
- 2002 WTO publication on Tourism and Poverty Alleviation
- 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Implementation Plan
- 2003 WTO Declaration on Tourism and Climate Change
- NET (Network of European Private Entrepreneurs in the Tourism Sector) Charter for Environmentally Sustainable Tourism
- ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter
- Friends of Nature International Ten Guidelines for a Sustainable Development of Tourism
- EUROPARC Federation European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas
- UNEP (2003) publication Tourism and Local Agenda 21 -The Role of Local Authorities in Sustainable Tourism
- EU-financed project VISIT (Voluntary Initiatives for Sustainability In Tourism)
  - ¥ accreditation of tourism eco-labels
  - ¥ European Indicators for Sustainable Tourism Development (together with the EEA)

### **Up-coming international meetings**

<b>The Challenge of Sustainable Tourism in Mass-Tourist Destinations Rimini</b> <a href="http://www.provincia.rimini.it/agenda21/news/2003_conferenza_ts">www.provincia.rimini.it/agenda21/news/2003_conferenza_ts</a>	<b>13 Dec 2003</b>
<b>Tourism: Competitiveness and Sustainability in a European Context, Dublin, Ireland</b> <a href="http://www.eu2004.ie/templates/meeting.asp?sNavlocator=5,13&amp;list_id=252">www.eu2004.ie/templates/meeting.asp?sNavlocator=5,13&amp;list_id=252</a>	<b>5 April 2004</b>
<b>International Conference Sustainable Tourism 2004 , Segovia, Spain</b> <a href="http://www.wessex.ac.uk/conferences/2004/sustainabletourism04/index.html">www.wessex.ac.uk/conferences/2004/sustainabletourism04/index.html</a>	<b>7 - 9 July 2004</b>
<b>5th International Conference on Environmental Problems in Coastal Regions, Alicante, Spain</b>	

## OUTCOMES OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ECOTOURISM (IYE) 2002:

**W**TO Report to the UN General Assembly on activities undertaken by governments and international organizations. At the request of the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution A/RES/53/200, and the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1998/40, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) has prepared this report on the activities undertaken by States and major international organizations in the framework of the International Year of Ecotourism (IYE). This report presents, in its first part, all the activities carried out by WTO, UNEP and other international organizations in preparation for and during the IYE. In its second part, this report synthesises the activities undertaken by governments in the framework of the IYE. This information, mainly based on the responses of 93 countries to a questionnaire sent by WTO, is structured according to the following six main themes:

1. National policy
2. Activities and publications
3. Stakeholders participation and support
4. Awareness raising
5. Regulation
6. Cooperation.

The report reveals an extremely wide range of activities stimulated by the IYE at the national and local levels, with the participation of the various sectors involved in ecotourism. In general terms, even though the global situation of ecotourism still needs improvements, the International Year of Ecotourism permitted, in most countries and in all domains, to improve sustainability levels in ecotourism, and in the tourism sector generally. This year served to stimulate the replication of good practices among governments and private companies,

<http://www.world-tourism.org/sustainable/IYE/IYE-Rep-UN-GA.htm>

### MIO-ECSDE PROJECTS RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

<p><b>SUDECIR</b> Sustainable Development of European Cities and Regions</p> <p>“The case study of Rhodes Island”</p>	<p>During the two year research project SUDECIR, the four involved European partner-Institutes<sup>1</sup> come out with a number of interesting observations, outcomes and proposals concerning regional sustainable development planning. The primary objective of the project, which was supported, amongst others, by DGXII of the European Commission, was to develop a (bottom-up) analytical concept and an associated set of practical guidelines which, when applied to a well-defined region, would produce for that region a clear and concrete path towards sustainability. Indeed, derived from scientific theory and refined by practical experience, the SUDECIR project developed and tested an approach for assessing the sustainability of a given region, for identifying those sectors that are most important for further progress, for ensuring the public education and participation necessary for the development of appropriate action, for tracking progress toward sustainable development, and, crucially, for the periodic review and revision of appropriate action plans.</p> <p>In the framework of SUDECIR, MIO-ECSDE mainly focused on the analysis of the sector of <b>tourism</b> and conducted a case-study on a typical Mediterranean coastal region, the island of Rhodes, the development of which is dominated by tourism.</p> <p>Further analysis and description of the project have been given in the books</p> <p>¥ Sustainable Development of European Cities and Regions (SUDECIR), edited by G.H. Vonkeman (2000) (see relevant chapters by Scoullou M.J. et al.).</p> <p>¥ M. Scoullou et al. 1999, Planning Sustainable Regional Development. Principles, Tools and Practices. The Case study of Rhodes Island — Greece . MIO-ECSDE.</p>	<p><b>1996 - 1998</b></p>
<p><b>WALKING THE PATH</b> Information material and guided tours in the Athens historic centre during the Olympic Games</p>	<p>The project is directed to promote sensitization and awareness raising about the value of the Greek cultural/historical heritage and, in parallel, about the need to adopt sustainable and respectful behaviors, friendly to the local environment and the local natural resources.</p> <p>Although the project targets in particular the visitors travelling to and inside of Greece on the occasion of the Olympic Games and is inspired by local needs and facts, its messages can be abstracted from the very local and temporal context becoming a globally valid code of conduct for viable behaviors in corresponding situations anywhere else.</p> <p>The project deliverables will mainly consist of the production of information material proposing itineraries that combine sites of archeological and historical importance with interesting landscape and natural elements (particular vegetal formations and animal species) and highlight the kind of behaviors that visitors should adopt in order to enjoy the beauty of these sites without damaging/degrading them. In addition, guided tours will be organized for interested visitors.</p>	<p><b>2004</b></p>
<p><b>Protection and Management of Four Natura 2000 Sites on the Isle of Corfu, Greece</b></p>	<p>The project aims for the protection and management of four different Natura 2000 sites situated on the island of Corfu. These sites are two wetlands, a salt marsh and a coastal zone, and all of them are already under many pressures which are expected to increase, a fact that makes their protection and integrated management imminent. It is a three year project and the main partners are two national NGO members of MIO-ECSDE (Elliniki Etairia and the Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature), the Ecology Club of Corfu and local authorities. The overall objective is to successfully protect and manage these areas and then use the model for other areas under similar stress in other parts of Greece and the Mediterranean.</p> <p>The proposal gives emphasis to the particularities of the four sites and targets the conservation and protection of their important ecosystemic features such as the poseidonia beds in the coastal zone, the sand dunes in the wetland areas and the otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) which seeks refuge in these areas.</p> <p>The project also foresees a Mediterranean seminar for all interested stakeholders (NGOs, Universities, local authorities, etc.) in order to inform/train on the actions applied in the specific type of biotopes. This will help in the exchange of experience and know-how and</p>	<p><b>2004</b></p>

<sup>1</sup> SUDECIR Research Team:  
**IEEP** - Brussels, Belgium: Institute for European Environmental Policy, Coordinator  
**STENUM** - Graz, Austria: Forschungsgesellschaft für Stoff, Energie und Umweltfragen  
**TAURUS** - Trier, Germany: Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Umwelt, Regional und Strukturforchung,  
**MIO-ECSDE** - Athens, Greece: Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development



## MIO-ECSDE Profile

The Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development, is a Federation of Mediterranean Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for the Environment and Development. MIO-ECSDE acts as a technical and political platform for the intervention of NGOs in the Mediterranean scene. In cooperation with Governments, International Organizations and other socio-economic partners, MIO-ECSDE plays an active role for the protection of the environment and the sustainable development of the Mediterranean Region.

### Background

MIO-ECSDE became a federation of Mediterranean NGOs in March 1996. Its roots go back to the early 80s, when the expanding Mediterranean membership of the European Community encouraged the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) to form its Mediterranean Committee supported by Elliniki Etairia (The Hellenic Society for the Protection of the Environment and the Cultural Heritage). The Mediterranean Information Office (MIO) was established in 1990 as a network of NGOs, under a joint project of EEB and Elliniki Etairia and in close collaboration with the Arab Network of Environment and Development (RAED). The continuous expansion of MIO-ECSDE's Mediterranean NGO network and the increasing request for their representation in Mediterranean and International Fora, led to the transformation of MIO-ECSDE to its current NGO Federation status. Today it has a membership of 98 NGOs from 22 Mediterranean countries.

### Our Mission

Our mission is to protect the Natural Environment (flora and fauna, biotopes, forests, coasts, natural resources, climate) and the Cultural Heritage (archaeological monuments, and traditional settlements, cities, etc.) of the Mediterranean Region. The ultimate goal of MIO-ECSDE is to promote Sustainable Development in a peaceful Mediterranean.

### Major tools and methods

Major tools and methods used by MIO-ECSDE in order to achieve its objectives are the following:

- Promotion of the understanding and collaboration among the people of the Mediterranean, especially through their NGOs, between NGOs and Governments, Parliaments, Local Authorities, International Organizations and socio-economic actors of the Mediterranean Region.
- Assistance for the establishment, strengthening, co-operation and co-ordination of Mediterranean NGOs and facilitation of their efforts by ensuring the flow of information among relevant bodies.
- Promotion of education, research and study on Mediterranean issues, by facilitating collaboration between NGOs and Scientific and Academic Institutions.
- Raising of public awareness on crucial Mediterranean environmental issues, through campaigns, publications, exhibitions, public presentations, etc.

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