

**POSITION PAPER ON
THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM
AND THE MITIGATION OF ITS EFFECTS**
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**EUROPA
NOSTRA**

*Fédération européenne du patrimoine culturel
Pan-European Federation for Cultural Heritage*

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Introduction

1. The Europa Nostra position paper to the EU Institutions of June 2005 ("Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe") laid due emphasis on the place of heritage as an asset for sustainable economic development in Europe, with special emphasis on cultural tourism. The relevant extract from the paper is attached at Annex A.
2. The Europa Nostra Cultural Heritage Forum, which was held in Malta as part of its Annual Congress in May 2006, focused on the theme of "Cultural Tourism: Its Encouragement and Control". There has therefore been an opportunity for Europa Nostra to examine this important issue further and to develop its ideas accordingly. A copy of the Malta Declaration, which was passed unanimously by Europa Nostra's General Assembly, is at Annex B.

Aim

3. The aim of this paper is to submit the main conclusions and recommendations on cultural tourism arising from the Forum to the EU Institutions and the Council of Europe for their consideration.

Tourism: A Key to Growth and Employment in Europe

4. Tourism is a growing and complex business. It is fast becoming one of the world's most significant economic activities. In the European Union the travel and tourism industry is estimated to have generated about 1706 billion Euros of economic activity in 2005, while the direct and indirect impact of European tourism accounted for about 11.5% of GDP and 24.3 million jobs (about 12% of total employment). Tourism in Europe is forecast to rise by around 2 to 3 per cent in 2006.
5. Cultural tourism is that form of domestic and international tourism whose object is, among other aims, the discovery and enjoyment of historic monuments and sites focusing on the immovable and movable cultural heritage, including the cultural landscapes, of heritage travel destination areas, to experience places and activities that authentically represent the cultural heritage of the host communities.
6. Tourism and culture are seen as two powerful drivers for growth across Europe. They are important as a means of delivering the Lisbon Agenda for economic growth and employment. They also play a vital role in fostering a greater understanding of the rich diversity of regional cultures of Europe and a deeper appreciation of the common European heritage. More than a third of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites are in Europe. Cultural tourism thrives on the discovery and enjoyment of historic monuments and sites focusing on the built cultural heritage, including the cultural landscapes. It is a direct adjunct to cultural heritage.

The Challenges

7. But there is an inevitable dichotomy between satisfying the pressure for economic growth through tourism and protecting the cultural heritage sites and monuments that lie at its heart. There is, therefore, a need not only to integrate tourism and culture into networks or geographic groupings, but also to establish quality standards or systems of good practice to increase their effectiveness and efficiency, as well as to safeguard Europe's cultural heritage. The key, as always, lies in finding the right balance between encouraging the expansion of cultural tourism and safeguarding heritage sites and monuments by keeping the volume of tourists to heritage travel destination areas to within optimum sustainable limits.

8. The challenges that are at the core of the discussion on the encouragement and control of cultural tourism fall under five main headings:
 - The need for sustainable growth in cultural tourism through adherence to international standards and principles;
 - The need to foster closer cooperation and best practice between all the stake-holders involved in cultural tourism;
 - The need to encourage deepening of the European identity and cultural exchanges through cultural tourism;
 - The need to implement practical steps to achieve a workable balance between tourism and cultural heritage; and
 - The need to take account of the transport related impact of increased cultural tourism on the historic environment as a result of air travel, city congestion and the associated pollution and effects on climate change.

Sustainable Growth in Cultural Tourism: Standards and Principles

9. Since 1999 both the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) have published excellent policy documents on cultural tourism and the need for controls. These are set out in two key documents : the WTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and the Principles of the International Cultural Tourism Charter established by ICOMOS.
10. Of the two documents, ICOMOS covers the issue of cultural tourism, and how to deal with it from a heritage perspective, most comprehensively. The WTO Code of Ethics for Tourism devotes a specific Article (Article 4 - 'Tourism, a user of the cultural heritage of mankind and a contributor to its enhancement') to cultural tourism, while ranging far more widely in nine other Articles into all other aspects of tourism, its benefits and effects.
11. There have also been several most commendable documents by the EU Institutions and the Council of Europe referring to sustainable tourism development. We list at Annex C a comprehensive summary of the main documents broken down into four categories dealing with Tourism : A key to Growth and Employment in Europe; Sustainable Growth in Cultural Tourism : Standards and Principles; Closer Cooperation between stake-holders; and Encouraging the Deepening of the European Identity.
12. The ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter should be regarded as the base document on cultural tourism *per se*. Despite the passage of time since the publication of the WTO and ICOMOS documents, it is considered that they should form the point of departure for adapting the principles for the balanced development of tourism they enunciate to the European context in 2006 and beyond.

Closer Cooperation between Stake-holders

13. There are a number of stake-holders in European cultural tourism. These include national, regional and local governments, as well as tourism and heritage organisations, including land-owners. Their common interest lies in the encouragement of cultural tourism. Each has a crucial role to play both in supporting the strategic direction being taken on tourism by the European Institutions and the Council of Europe, and in building bridges between heritage organisations, the tourism industry and local communities through greater dialogue and understanding. The European Cultural Tourism Network is the only network which brings tourism and the heritage industry professionals together to exchange experience and best practice. As such it deserves continuing support.

14. The EU Institutions, the Council of Europe, national, regional and local governments and tourism industry and heritage organisations, including land-owners engaged in cultural tourism should be encouraged to adhere to the principles in the WTO Tourism Code of Ethics and the ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter by taking steps to ensure the achievement of sustainable and balanced development of cultural tourism in Europe and the implementation of good practice.

Encouraging the Deepening of the European Identity

15. Cultural tourism is an inevitable component of cultural heritage. Our common European heritage also constitutes a key ingredient of the European identity. Cultural tourism is not only one of the key engines of economic growth. The concrete discovery of cultural diversity, common identity and pluralism are equally important stakes for cultural tourism. It has a vital role to play in encouraging both a greater understanding of the rich diversity of the national and regional cultures of Europe and the greater appreciation of our common European heritage, roots and culture. Cultural tourism can therefore help further the cause of European integration and identity by fostering a better understanding between the peoples of Europe.

16. To the degree that it is an entity, Europe is more a cultural than a political, or even an economic, entity. Cultural heritage is fundamental to European integration and cooperation. It is a distinct feature of the European identity which should be safeguarded through maintaining high standards of training and professional practice in the conservation and management of the cultural heritage for the benefit and well-being of people in the host communities, who should be made more aware of the need to sustain their cultural heritage, as well those engaged in cultural tourism. Cultural tourism is among the foremost means of cultural exchanges between the people of European countries and among the most valuable instruments of inter-cultural dialogue. It has a central role to play in promoting inter-cultural dialogue in Europe, as well as being a bridge-builder between cultures in Europe.

Practical Steps to Achieve a Workable Balance

17. While both the WTO Code of Ethics and the ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter lay down first rate and authoritative guiding principles for managing cultural tourism, we consider that there are a number of other practical steps which stake-holders involved in cultural tourism - national, regional and local governments and tourism industry and heritage organisations - should take in the contemporary European context.

18. We consider, specifically, therefore that the EU Institutions, the Council of Europe, national, regional and local governments and tourism industry and heritage organisations, including land-owners engaged in cultural tourism should:
 - Champion sustainable growth in the cultural tourism market, while also taking positive steps to prevent damage and degradation of the cultural heritage by careful planning to maintain the volume of tourists to heritage travel destination areas to within optimum sustainable limits;
 - Respect and recognize national or regional economic needs and the revenue and employment prospects generated through cultural tourism, provided one does not sacrifice the essential character and cultural tourism potential of the host communities;
 - Encourage cultural tourism in a balanced and sustainable way as a means of investing in and regenerating cultural heritage areas and experiencing the places and activities that authentically represent the cultural heritage, character and history of an area, whilst ensuring the widest access to Europe's cultural heritage;
 - Safeguard the conservation of cultural heritage sites by anticipating construction development pressures in the travel destination areas and applying techniques to prevent undesirable over-development and damage as a result of the demands of cultural tourism;

- Protect individual heritage sites in travel destination areas of outstanding heritage value from the pressures of cultural tourism by introducing and adhering to clear guide-lines for the management of such sites;
- Work together to enhance and invest in the cultural heritage features of travel destination areas by developing and improving them in distinctive ways to sustain the rich diversity of European culture;
- Encourage commercial and civic groups to create partnerships to promote cultural heritage at the local community level by building on the travel destination area's history and culture and providing a distinctive visitor experience which is both educational and entertaining;
- Encourage by all means possible the heritage conservation community and the tourism industry to cooperate more closely together to safeguard European cultural heritage, including the cultural landscape, of heritage travel destination areas; and
- Promote the idea of a European Label for Sustainable Cultural Tourism, within the framework of the work for a label for European tourism as a global destination, through the above principles.

The Impact of Climate Change

19. The effects of air travel and other forms of fossil burning travel undoubtedly contribute through the pollution they cause to climate change. A significant proportion of medium and long distance travel to destinations of cultural interest is conducted by air. Carbon emissions from this form of travel are high and contribute to air pollution and climate change. On the ground, vehicles and city congestion also add to the polluting effects. Pollution and the resulting climate change have a negative impact on the historic environment (the corrosion of buildings, increased flood risks and others). While in the wider scale of the global climate change problem, we should not exaggerate the contribution made by travel to historic sites through cultural tourism, it would be remiss not to incorporate the costs associated with responding to these impacts in the equation of benefits and liabilities related to cultural tourism. A marker to this effect needs to be laid down.

Conclusions

20. It is concluded that

- Cultural tourism is one of the key drivers of European economic growth and development and plays a vital role in fostering greater understanding of the rich diversity of regional cultures of Europe and a deeper appreciation of the common European heritage;
- European cultural heritage is a distinct feature of the European identity which should be safeguarded through maintaining high standards in the fields of heritage conservation, architecture and the sustainable development of urban and rural, built and natural environment, for the benefit and well-being of its own people as well as those engaged in cultural tourism;
- Cultural tourism is among the foremost means of cultural exchanges between the people of European countries and among the most valuable instruments of inter-cultural dialogue; there is a continuing need for improved documentation and interpretation of cultural heritage sites to meet the wider European interest;
- Several recent reports by the EU Institutions have focused on the need for sustainable tourism development, but the principles embodied in the World Tourism Organisation's Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and the Principles of the International Cultural Tourism Charter established by the International Council on Monuments and Sites should in addition form the authoritative guiding principles of managing cultural tourism in a sustainable manner;

- National, regional and local government and tourism industry and heritage organisations, including land-owners engaged in cultural tourism should be urged to adhere to the principles for the balanced development of tourism set out by the ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter; and to ensure the achievement of sustainable development of cultural tourism in Europe and the implementation of good practice;
- The European Cultural Tourism Network which brings tourism and heritage industry professionals together to exchange experience and best practice deserves encouragement and continuing support;
- The specific practical, issues highlighted in paragraph 18 above should be adopted for implementation to encourage sustainable cultural tourism in Europe.
- A marker needs to be laid down about the effects of increased cultural tourism travel on climate change; the costs associated with responding to these impacts need also to be weighed in the balance.

Recommendations

21. It is recommended that the EU Institutions should note of the conclusions in paragraph 20 above with a view to encouraging the principles of sustainable cultural tourism on a European-wide basis, while at the same time introducing the necessary steps to protect individual cultural heritage sites.

22. It is further recommended that an Action Plan should be drawn up on a European-wide basis which:
 - Encourages national, regional and local governments, the tourism industry and heritage organizations, including land-owners engaged in cultural tourism, to adopt the specific actions highlighted in paragraph 18 above as the bases for action within their spheres of interest and the bench-marks for good practice in this field;
 - Supports the European Cultural Tourism Network in its efforts to bring the tourism and heritage industry professionals together with a view to fostering best practice, including the bench-marks for good practice in paragraph 18 above;
 - Encourages all stakeholders engaged in cultural tourism to adhere to the principles in the World Tourism Code of Ethics and the ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter to achieve sustainable and balanced development of cultural tourism in Europe and the implementation of good practice;
 - Highlights and fosters integration, inter-cultural dialogue and better understanding between the peoples of Europe through cultural tourism exchanges. The 2007 Commission on Culture should lay stress on the central role which cultural tourism can play in promoting inter-cultural dialogue and in acting as a bridge-builder between cultures in Europe.

EXTRACT FROM EUROPA NOSTRA'S POSITION PAPER TO THE EU INSTITUTIONS "CULTURAL HERITAGE COUNTS FOR EUROPE" (JUNE 2005)

B. HERITAGE AS AN ASSET FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT : SPECIAL FOCUS ON CULTURAL TOURISM

As many reports and studies show, cultural heritage (both its historic and its natural components) is capable of generating a wide range of positive economic benefits. These include benefits to individuals as a result of new job opportunities or the higher prices commanded by homes with historic features, and benefits to entire communities thanks to the regeneration of run-down historic areas. The economy also benefits directly from a vibrant and expanding tourist industry, much of which depends upon a high quality historic and natural environment to attract new visitors.^{11/12}

Tourism is one of the most important and fast growing sectors of the world economy and of the European Union. In particular Europe is the world leading tourism destination. It contributes at a rate of at least 4% to the EU GDP, accounts for more than 6 million direct jobs and for more than 2 million business most of them being small and medium-size undertakings. In addition, according to some estimates, more than 50% of tourist activity in Europe is driven by cultural heritage and cultural tourism is expected to grow the most in the tourism sector. Sustainable European tourism requires, *inter alia*, preservation of cultural heritage resources which are crucial for its development. This is the asset of its competitiveness in the world market. In so doing cultural tourism contributes to the

¹¹ See Heritage Counts 2004 Report, chapter 5.2. on Economic Benefits, www.heritagecounts.org.uk

¹² For an additional analysis of the economic value of cultural heritage see, among others, the recent study prepared by Dr. T. Nypan, Directorate for Cultural Heritage, in Norway "Cultural Heritage Monuments and historic buildings as value generators in a post-industrial economy (with emphasis on exploring the role of the sector as economic driver)"

safeguard and enhancement of Europe's cultural heritage, one of the Union objectives as set out in Article I-3.3 of the European Constitution.

Furthermore, the intra-European cultural tourism constitutes an important vehicle for promoting, among the European citizens, the awareness of Europe's cultural dimension, of its cultural "unity in diversity", and also for promoting the sense of European identity and sense of belonging. For all these reasons the promotion of cultural tourism is one of the primary objectives and actions for Europa Nostra.

To this aim Europa Nostra strongly supports the current action on tourism by the EU Institutions, in particular the European Commission Communication on "Basic Orientations for the sustainability of the European Tourism" (on which it has communicated comments and suggestions), the work of the Tourism Sustainability Group foreseen in that Communication and the draft Report and Motion for an EP Resolution of Mr Luis Queiro, MEP, on "New prospects and new challenges for sustainable European tourism" presented to the EP Committee on Transport and Tourism on 1.3.2005.

Europa Nostra recommendations:

- To promote and take advantage of the great synergy between cultural heritage and sustainable tourism for the promotion and enhancement of both.
- Given the fact that cultural heritage is an invaluable economic asset having the "power of attraction" for cultural tourism without getting sufficient financial benefit in return from this important economic activity, the EU and national or local public authorities should explore ways in which those economic imbalances can be smoothed out, in particular through fiscal measures (including a reduced VAT rate) and/or grants.
- Cultural heritage education is important for the attractiveness of cultural and quality tourism. It should be developed and spread throughout Europe, both intra schools and extra. Guidebooks stressing the European dimension of Europe's Cultural Tourism destinations should be promoted.
- Cooperation between all stakeholders should be pursued, in particular the public and private sectors, between the heritage conservation community and tourism industry to protect cultural heritage as declared in the International Cultural Tourism Charter, adopted by ICOMOS in 1999.
- The European Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards constitutes an effective tool for increasing the attractiveness of cultural tourism destinations and itineraries. The competent services of the European Commission for culture and tourism respectively could start a coordinated action in this sense. Europa Nostra is ready to cooperate.
- In the framework of the work for a Label for European Tourism as a global destination, one should think to one particular Label for Cultural European Tourism.

MAIN DOCUMENTS ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN EUROPE AND AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

Tourism: A Key to Growth and Employment in Europe

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EC (2000b), Towards quality coastal tourism. Integrated quality management of coastal tourist destinations, EC Enterprise and Industry.

EC (2000c), Towards quality urban tourism. Integrated quality management of urban tourist destinations, EC Enterprise and Industry.

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Encouraging the Deepening of the European Identity

UNESCO (2005), Développement durable et valorisation de la diversité culturelle : comment l'enseignement du tourisme s'adapte-il à ces nouveaux enjeux, UNESCO/UNITWIN.

Research

Research under the sixth Framework Programme (FP 6) of the European Union.

PICTURE - Pro-active management of the Impact of Cultural Tourism upon Urban.

SurveNIR - Infrared Spectroscopy Tool for Collection Surveying.

CONSIST - Comparison of Conservation Materials and Strategies for Sustainable Exploitation of Immovable Industrial Cultural Heritage made of Iron and Steel.

SUSTAINING HERITAGE - Sustaining Europe's cultural heritage: from research to policy.

Acronyms

CoE – Council of Europe
EC – European Commission
EP – European Parliament
EVA - Electronic Information, the Visual Arts and Beyond
ICOM – International Council of Museums
ICOMOS – International Council on Monuments and Sites
OWHC – Organization of World Heritage Cities
WTO – World Tourism Organization